

FACTORS RELATED TO HUNTING AND FISHING PARTICIPATION IN THE UNITED STATES

PHASE III: FISHING FOCUS GROUPS



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Phase III: Fishing Focus Groups

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Section I • Introduction & Methodology

Introduction

This report presents the results of five focus groups conducted across the nation on fishing participation. The focus groups were conducted throughout 1993 and 1994 with active anglers and inactive or ex-anglers. One of the focus groups was conducted with active African-American anglers only. A series of eight focus groups were conducted in 1992 on hunting participation; these results are presented in the phase II report of this project. These focus groups were conducted in order to gain insight into the motivations, satisfactions and perceptions influencing fishing participation, recruitment, and desertion.

Focus groups contain 10-12 people recruited to represent active anglers and ex-anglers to provide new insights, new hypotheses and understanding through the interaction process. The use of focus groups is an accepted research technique for qualitative explorations of attitudes, motivations and behavior¹ predispositions and practices.

The focus groups were complemented by an in-depth literature review on hunting and fishing participation. The literature review and focus groups followed by a study on hunting and fishing participation using correlation and regression techniques to

understand the relationships between factors associated with rates of hunting and fishing participation and variables such as total state population, gender, percent of the population living in urban areas, percent of the population living in Metropolitan Statistical Areas, level of education and income, and several other factors that affect hunting and fishing recruitment, participation and desertion rates. This study used the latest U. S. Bureau of Census population figures as well as hunting and fishing participation figures from the 1991 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting and Wildlife-Associated Recreation. A questionnaire survey on hunter, angler, ex-hunter and ex-angler opinion and attitudes regarding initiation, participation and desertion was administered in 1995. From these analyses, a comprehensive, final report on factors related to hunting and fishing participation and policy recommendations was developed to assist fish and wildlife managers increase hunter and angler satisfaction levels, thereby better meeting the needs of hunters and anglers, and allowing agencies to target deserters and potential deserters for information/education and public relations programs. Study results are reported through a five-volume series of publications: the literature review (Phase I), the hunting focus groups report (Phase II), this fishing focus groups report is Phase III, the survey results and the multivariate analysis report (Phase IV), and the final report, recommendations and discussion (Phase V).

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Methodology

A complete description of focus group methodology is given in the phase II report of this project (Bissell and Duda 1993). The selection of participants in these groups was based on participation in fishing recreation. Individuals were recruited by phone and consisted of active anglers (Fish) and inactive anglers (X-Fish). Active and inactive anglers were defined based on frequency of license purchase and number of fishing trips taken. Among the inactive anglers interviewed, there were individuals with varying levels of avidity for fishing, including people who had only fished as children or had fished very casually once or twice.

One focus group of active anglers was conducted in Great Falls, Montana (MT), one focus group of active and inactive anglers was conducted in Seattle, Washington (WA), one focus group of active and one focus group of inactive anglers were conducted in Tampa, Florida (FL), and one focus group of African-American active anglers was conducted in Richmond, Virginia (VA). These participants were drawn from urban, suburban and rural populations. Other than recruiting participants who were 18 years of age or older, no effort was made to differentiate participants by age, gender, income or residence. All but the African American group in Richmond consisted of mixed ethnic backgrounds and all of the groups were mixed in terms of age, income and gender. Participants were paid an incentive of \$30 to \$50 based on local market conditions.

The focus groups were video and audio taped (with the exception of the Richmond group which was only audio taped) and observed by the researchers through one-way mirrors. Most of the groups were also observed by staff from state or federal agencies. Analysis was conducted from direct observation, review of typed transcripts, viewing videotapes and listening to audio tapes. Thus the analysis is in four iterations of the data: 1) the actual focus group observation, 2) the transcription of the focus group audio or video tape, 3) the analysis of each separate group, and 4) the

development of an overall analysis. Please see the phase II report of this project (Bissell and Duda 1993) for a complete description of analytic technique and analytic framework.

Section II • Results

Site I • Great Falls, Montana November 8, 1993

Transcription: Active Anglers

Demographic Characteristics:

white, female moderator
seven white males
two white females

- Q. What can you recall on your very first fishing trip? Who taught you how to fish?

We were just there sitting and relaxing. We would catch one every once in a while. Sometimes we would catch a big one. I went with my father. I guess I was about 11 or 12. We were in Minnesota.

I went with my family. It was just something we did. We'd throw everything in the car and take off. One time, we had some relatives visiting us from Wisconsin or Minnesota (I am not sure which of the 2) and we took 2 vehicles when we left. We fished quite a bit the first day, up and down the river and up on top of the lake. Everywhere. We went down there to the campground in the far corner and we stayed overnight there. The next day, when everybody got

ready to go, I hollered to my parents that I was going down in the corner fishing. They were supposed to hollar when they were ready to go and I would come up. Well, some time went by and I thought, they ought to be ready to go by now, so I came up out of there and they were gone! I was probably maybe 10 or 12. I got my mind set that I might have to stay there that night and so I was thinking of things I might have to do. What had happened was that they both thought that I was in the other vehicle and they got down the road past Craig and finally figured out what had happened and they came back and got me. A lot of things went through my mind.

My first fishing trip was a horror. I fell through one of the beaver holes on the bank. I was 6 or 7 and with my grandfather. He was the best fisherman in Montana. I have fished a lot since then.

I went and got the hired hand up. We went and got dad so he didn't have to work. It was kind of a way to get out of a sweat.

I remember when I was about 7, my granddad got a boat and I was sitting in the back seat and a boat was going past us in the other direction and they had their lines in the water while passing us and one came up and hooked me in the shoulder and came out at the same time.

Probably when my dad bought a boat. There were 5 kids in our family and we all went out to the lake. We were bass fishing. It was a lot of fun and excitement because they (the bass) really fight. You have to be paying attention. I liked being with my family. My dad worked all the time. We kids are all 13 months apart and so we did a lot of things together. That was just a time when we could have a special time with our dad.

Well, my dad wasn't really into fishing and so we (my brother and I) would go a lot of the time with my uncle and my aunt. They enjoyed the outdoors. When we went, they only had a small camper and so one would have to sleep in the truck with my uncle and the other would sleep in the

trailer with my aunt. Sleeping out was just as much fun as the fishing. My uncle and I would always fool around if we weren't fishing (playing catch or football or whatever, just enjoying the outdoors). It was my uncle who taught us how to fish.

We went east to Whitefield to the creek. Back in those days, there weren't any trout in there, but there were some suckers. We were just little fellows (10 or 12 years old) and you could actually sneak up on a fish and reach in there, and you got him! He was just a sucker! You don't have to be fast, you just gotta sneak up on him. Nobody taught us that, we just kind of figured it out. Fishing was just a kind of breakaway from work. We had to take care of the garden and home. It was fun getting away to the swimming hole. My parents didn't go with us. Suckers weren't fit to eat. To this day, I associate fishing with the leisure time and the fun.

My first time fishing, an old friend of ours taught me how to keep my hands off of other people's fish. I was probably about 6-1/2 or 7 years old and they were fishing and they caught a nice one. It was about 7-1/2 or 8 pounds and they had it on a stringer and I had to play with it. It fell off the stringer and fell back into the water and then they taught me that I shouldn't play with other people's fish.

Well, it is kind of a mixture because I grew up here on the river and so I spent a lot of time fishing with friends and family.

Pretty much my dad.

My grandpa.

Q. What other kind of fun things do you experience when you go fishing?

Just being away from the public. You get out there and you can just meditate.

It's just time to get away from home and work and a chance to have some leisure time. It's a nice change. Then it feels good when I get back home. My mind is clear.

A way to meet your buddies. There are about 4 or 5 of us that meet up at Canyon Ferry on Memorial Day every year. They come from all over. We just meet every year and go up there fishing for a couple of days. We also go up there to drink beer. Two years ago, I don't think any of us even dropped a line in the water. We drained both tanks on the boat too. We waterski and we used to go spring skiing and snow skiing up on the glacier. As things progressed and people started to buy houses and vehicles and stuff we decided to do something less expensive. The beer bill started to get pretty high and so now we are going to have to figure something else out.

I'd say spending time with your children and family and parents. Because I mean, the memories that I have when I was a kid... I sit back at home when I am not fishing and daydream about all the memories in my head. You'll have that for the rest of your life. You can go back and have those special memories of your life.

Teaching your own kids is almost as much fun as actually catching fish. Watching them grab that pole and seeing their faces light up.

Or taking the grandkids out. You just gotta teach them, you know. They sure enjoy it. There's nothing like taking little kids out there. It's just a joy watching them.

Just getting away from town. You can relax and get back to nature the way it used to be, not the way it is now. The way the city is, you just can't put up with it. You gotta relax somewhere. My son-in-law has a one-track mind that's called farm, so my wife and I pick up the grandkids and get out of town. I'm teaching my grandkids how to fish now and it's fun to watch them. One kid will sit there and throw out the line and reel it in repeatedly and that's all he does. The other will just sit there and wait patiently and let the fish fight all day long and never get hooked.

My wife and I just enjoy getting out and getting away from the kids. If we stay home, they are constantly calling and wanting us to babysit or do something else. We have

always loved camping and we just get away and it gives us a chance to think about what we are going to do in the coming week.

Remember to take your camera. That's always a good start because you get those fish together (you know the 'my fish is bigger than yours') if you take a picture of it, then there isn't much doubt then. One guy will always try to hold his fish a little ahead of yours. That will happen.

My kids have seen a lot of wildlife like bears and all that kind of stuff. There are a lot of kids in the school system that have never seen them and they are just amazed when kids come up and tell them, "Well, I saw a bear over the weekend" or something because a lot of these kids don't even get out. We leave every chance we get. Because people are different when they get out. You can always tell when someone has had a rest. They just aren't as tight or stressed out. I mean, once I get in the mountains, they have to force me to come home because I'd stay up there forever if I could. You just have a better attitude and things don't get to be quite as bad.

My friend and I used to go camping all the time. We had a boat and we'd take up the boat and we would leave the boys and Helen with a friend and we would go up there all the time. Probably about half the stuff we did was insane. We would drive around with the boat sometimes and drink beer. One time we got a keg of beer. It was about a 16-gallon keg and in one night between the 2 of us, the drink was gone. We were about gone too.

Is the Fish and Game going to see this tape? I got a lot of war stories about that!

Back in the early 60's, we were over there at Christmas Island and we were fishing off a utility boat that we took off the ship. We caught a bunch of blue tuna and we brought them back and the officers confiscated them for their mess. They ate it all and we didn't get any. But they got food poisoning and we didn't get any. It was because of that atomic fall test up there. The fish got contaminated.

Well, we could have harassed them for some of the fish to eat because every time we would go there, we would catch fish for them. They wouldn't let us fish there again.

- Q.** Regarding fishing today, what ways do you realize satisfaction when you go fishing today? How are things different from your earlier fishing times?

I don't think it has changed any. It is just as much fun. I'm retired and so I go about 2 or 3 times a week. I just love to get out there in the country, on the water. I love to boat fish.

It's a lot easier to relax now. When I was a kid, I was here, there, and everywhere. That's when I would hook the big ones, when you were out goofing around or doing something else and the pole was halfway in the water. I just like to sit there now. It depends on where I'm fishing. If you're fishing in the creeks, you have to keep moving more. Sometimes I like to just throw it out and sit there.

- Q.** Do you feel that the relaxing is important to you now?

Oh yeah. Just because I think I need it.

I've learned to just relax and enjoy it. When you are working around the public 7 days a week, it's nice to get out there away from the telephones and kids, it's nice. Then you aren't quite as sharp tempered.

Well, the fishing stories get a little wittier. Last year we took 2 boats out. We took a small boat and a big cruiser and we decided to have a contest, loser would buy beer all night at Riley's. So we got back on shore and me and Matt were the only 2 that had gone in the little boat. Three or 4 others had gone in the big boat. We asked, "How big a fish did you get?" They were saying they got one that was 2 pounds, one that was 3 pounds. Matt said, "Oh. The biggest one we got was 4 or 5 inches." They were laughing at us and then Matt looked at them and said, "but we were measuring them between the eyes."

The equipment is a lot better now. It used to be a little old

pole, a piece of string, and a hook with a worm on the end of it.

Q. Do you have fun shopping for fishing equipment? Would you explain how you have fun shopping for it?

Just looking for the new stuff. Always have to buy something new, go out and try it out and see if I can get that big one that I'm still looking for.

Rickery old gear. I like picking up the old fishhooks and stuff because you don't find them in the store any more. I like picking it up.

Well, generally when you go fishing now, it is a family affair. We have grandkids all up and down the line, you know. My son comes down from Alaska and their kids are just plumb wild about it. They don't seem to get out and do any fishing. I don't know if it is because they are kind of tied down to city life. They live in Fairbanks. He's a CPA and he is working pretty hard and the mother is busy just taking care of them. And so when they do go out fishing, it's for salmon or something like that. So we make it a family affair when they get down here. We have at least a day or 2 of doing that. It's like a get together.

I look at things different now because I have my own family. Now I see my daughter fishing and playing with her pole and it makes me see how my parents looked at it when I was a kid. You know, you look at things totally different. So now I look at it and daydream about what my parents thought when they saw me and my brother and my sister out being silly and throwing rocks in the water when we were supposed to be quiet.

Q. Are you a teacher now? Do you teach your children now how to fish?

I can cast it out there, but I don't like touching the worms. When I was a kid, it didn't bother me. I could touch anything. But now that I have kids, I just don't have the stomach for it anymore. Just touching them gives me the

heebie jeebies. So, I can't do that anymore.

I think nowadays kids grow faster and they learn faster. I enjoy watching them learn. My daughter, I take her and her husband. She always baits my hook, but she won't bait her husband's. He gets so mad.

I think another thing is that the way the world is going today, there is so much crime and there is so much going on that it is nice to get out and be out fishing. It is like you are away from all that. You know? It is nice and relaxing to be away from all that.

We didn't have camping trailers back then.

I don't have to have permission from my wife now. She is always with me.

True.

Q. How can you have fun just shopping for fishing equipment? Do you enjoy that?

I think everybody gets 2 or 3 magazines.

I don't like it. It's the opposite of women the way we like to shop for clothes and stuff. It's the same way for men when they're looking at hunting or fishing equipment. They say 'Come on, come on, the store is going to close' and 'Well, just 5 more minutes.' In fact, I think they are worse than women when shopping for sporting equipment.

I don't shop for my equipment. I let my friend's dad do it.

I just look at the equipment. I don't pay much attention to it since it has been so long since I have been out fishing anyway. It has been so long because my wife, she hates it. She doesn't like to fish and the ones I did go out with, they all died or moved away. It's been about 9 years since I last went fishing. My dad didn't care for fishing when I was a kid and after my uncle passed away, my dad didn't care for the outdoors or anything.

Q. In those circumstances, what would interest you to pick up fishing again?

It wouldn't take too much to do it. I still have all my

equipment at home. There are times I have gone out on account of the boat, but it has been so long since I have used the boat because with the kids and stuff and the wife working all the time, she gets so that on her days off, I'm doing stuff.

- Q. What keeps you from going fishing as much as you would like to?

This year, the rain.

The economy. The cost. When my dad died, I inherited probably \$4,000 worth of fishing equipment and so I haven't had to buy anything for numerous years. A lot of it was lines and leaders and that lot. So, you went out in the store before and saw a price tag of \$0.15, \$0.25, or \$0.30 and you go out today and it's \$4.50 for the same item.

Work.

Jobs.

Time. I just don't have any time to go. Too busy. Too many things to do. I have to work and I have appointments that I have to fulfill.

- Q. Have you replaced fishing with another activity?

Not totally. Somewhat. I like to play golf. I like to shoot rifle guns and targets. Even finding the time and the money to do that is rough.

Money is the main thing with me. Since I am only collecting social security and my wife works part-time, trying to find the money for the gear and the license is tough.

My wife's 'honey do' list.

Yes.

That's not a honey dew melon either.

Different priorities. You have to mow the lawn now. You can't just smoke your little brother into doing it. You can't give him a buck and he'll mow the lawn for you. Now that I have my own house, there's a lot of upkeep that has to be done on the outside. I like a nice looking lawn.

- Q. What other activities are keeping you from fishing?**

I've been doing more waterskiing. I've been doing more golfing and a lot more laying around.

I've been doing more things with wood.

I think that TV does it, too.

Video games.

I'm involved up at the Eagle's Lodge. I got involved in that.

I also go to another state Eagle's Lodge and help there.

I raise my child.

I do the things that the kids used to do when they were little and now they aren't home anymore to do it and I have to do it.

- Q. Where do you go to fish? In a lake or stream or gulf or what? Let's have a show of hands as to where you fish more. How many of you normally fish in a lake more than you do in a stream?**

(5 hands).

The lazy way to do it. Trolling. That's the most fun really.

When it gets hotter, you have to go way deep and so you have to have a lot of weight on it. You have to have your depth finder and your fish finder. Yep, you have to have those.

They have been catching fish in Walter, in the Canyon Ferry for years without that. Now, let's go back to the economics of fishing.

Well, you have to have all the toys too. That's the one good thing about being retired now. You can go when you want to go.

So that's what's getting you about being more expensive, not the \$4.50 leaders.

You've heard that remark that there's only one difference between men and boys and that's the price of their toys.

That's it.

- Q. So, how many are stream fishers?**

(3 hands).

- Q. And is that fly fishing or just fishing from the edge or gulf?
Or both?

(2 heads nod in agreement of fly fishing).

- Q. So do you prefer fishing with bait or with flies? Now we have one troller. Let's take it one at a time. How many people in here prefer to troll fish?

(4 hands).

- Q. Now, how many people prefer fly fishing?

(2 hands).

- Q. And bait?

(2 hands).

- Q. You don't like to put the worms on, but you like to fish with bait?

I don't mind putting the bait on.

I don't like putting the egg on. It's all slimy.

- Q. Something that I have noticed that you have shared with me tonight is that when you first started you had a lot of fun learning, and now you are still having fun, but it is a different kind of fun. Now you are experiencing the fun of teaching others and getting out and relaxing. Do you think fishing is as good today as it used to be?

(No, group consensus).

Well, there are so many more restrictions it seems like.

Well, back in the 40's you were allowed 20 fish and over.

You could catch all you wanted.

There were big fish and not these little bitty ones that you find nowadays. You could go up on Mouskrat, up there by Tenderfoot and you could catch a 2-1/3 or 3 pounder like a dream but now you are lucky if you get 6 inches.

Well, I don't know if it makes any difference on the amount of fish, but sometimes there ought to be a restriction on some of them. I know that I have gone night fishing out of

Colter...

I think that ought to be against the law.

No, if you are conscientious about it, and only take a few. You don't have to have a whole bunch and then throw them in the dump later or something like that. That's what is bad. I'll admit that. But the first time I was ever out there, we just had flashlights and you're supposed to use them just to bait your hook and stuff like that. Well, that's fine. But we were playing with the lights and stuff like that. We had a young fellow along. He was only about 9 years old, too. He saw a fish in the water, and pretty soon, one of them actually jumped in the boat! I told him, "That's a flying fish." Well that kid went plumb wild from then on. You couldn't keep him from fish. He thought about fish from then on and that was it. I think that was a heck of a good thing. You couldn't get any more excited than that kid was that night. That one's for sure.

Q. Now tell me about the regulations. You said you think there are too many regulations now?

Oh, not exactly in the respect for limitations and so on. There have to be (limitations). But, yes, you can't just go park anywhere anymore.

You better have a regulation book along with you so that...

And the size and the type. It's one thing after another. You don't mean to be doing anything wrong and all of the sudden, Hey! So, there you go.

There is so much there, you can't know it all. You have to have that book with you wherever you are so you can look and see what you can have and what you can't.

It changes a lot.

Yeah.

You can cross a fence and go to the next side of the fence and the rules change.

For just certain sections of the river it is this or that. Wherever you are, it is always different. Whether you're trolling, fly, or fishing holes or whatever.

The amount that people cut across also causes a problem with the land owners. They go through fences, they don't put gates back up. I mean if I had a nickel for every time I was out at midnight or 1 o'clock catching cows, I wouldn't be working right now. Just because some idiot left a gate open. Just something that small causes us a lot of pain and heartache. They drive wherever they want to. They get bored with fishing, they're climbing the hills. We've had a lot of people do that. It's just tearing up the pasture-land. No place to feed the cows anywhere.

- Q. Have the regulations that they have today and didn't have before influenced you in fishing less or have you just taken your regulations with you and kept going and had a good time?

I throw them in the garbage and go. I'll just have to take it if I get caught.

You can follow what the regulations are and still have fun.

Yeah, there has to be some regulation.

- Q. What sort of regulation do you think seems justified?

The daily limits. (general consensus)

I think they ought to charge those guys (the outfitters) more.

I think they should standardize things a bit more. Like they're saying, in some places around here, you're allowed to catch 3 and in some places 5. It's either 3 or 4 or whatever and why not that all over the state? Different sections, different fish.

- Q. What regulations are in effect that you have found to be unjust or more of a nuisance than you think is necessary?

The fact that you have to have that book with you and know what is what. There is so much there that you can't memorize it. It's all different for everything.

I think one of the things that is most obvious is the type of bait. And you don't use suckers and take them.

Yeah, you can't do that.

Things like that. That's very obvious...

I used to do that all the time.

If things like that are the most known things, are the most well shown in your book and different regulations, then kind of downgrade the issues so they don't become so strenuous. You know? You can't begin to know it all unless you are doing it every day, and every day, and every day.

They're going to change it all.

If they keep going at the rate they're going, in a few more years, it will be just like hunting. You'll have to have an outfitter or you can't go fishing.

- Q. Now that you brought the topic up, do you think outfitters are a compliment to fishing? Do they make any difference? Do they cause problems?

It's fine for taking the out-of-staters around.

It is fine for the people who don't work. There are a lot of people that can't live without that. See, they use fishing. They can't afford to go to the show, but you can pick up a fishing pole and a hook at a rummage sale real cheap and it's a way for people who don't have a lot to do.

Let's talk a bit about guides. Right there is a prime example. You have your guides. He gets first choice of when he can float it (his boat). The rest of us, if we want to float in there, we have to wait our turn because there is a limit. I don't think that is fair.

That's regulations. It's a pain in the ass to have everything we do regulated. Why can't I put a fence up around my house? Because it is regulated.

It may be a way of earning a living for those people, but I think it is also a right of mine to be able to do the same thing. And being told that I can't float today because the guide took his crew down, there are too many people on the river now. He gets a choice and I don't. I don't agree with that.

I agree with that in some ways, they are more of a pain. Like when they have the choice about when they go, how it is.

Them first. They have their first rights.

They don't go where I go (so they don't bother me). I have several boats and I go one place one day and then another place to trout fish. Your outfitters, they use the rivers more and I don't use the rivers.

Like I said, I tried to go up on Smith one time with some friends and we were told we couldn't because there were too many people out there that day and that was it.

They do have a limit on Smith.

- Q. Have these regulations slowed you down any in fishing or do you just kind of live with it and keep going and have a good time anyway?

I live with it and keep going. I don't worry about it. I have a stressful job and when I am away from it, I don't worry about what else is going on. I just enjoy myself.

Fishing now is just sticking by all this stuff.

It's just disappointing to travel 130 miles and then find out you can't fish.

That would be disappointing.

- Q. What do you think the state Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks could be doing to encourage people to fish more, to make fishing more fun?

Make themselves scarce! They can stay home and play their Nintendo games.

I have a little better attitude when they approach me. Very few of them will come up and talk to you just like another human being. You know, like "Hi, How are you? How are you doing today? Are you doing any good?" When they get all that out of the way, maybe they could tell you, "Oh, by the way, have you got a license with you or something?"

They need to be more like Andy Griffith.

Seriously.

You all, let's go back and explain what we're talking about when we say Fish and Game. Are we talking about the

people on the Commission who only listen to big business people or are we talking about the game warden who only looks at the little people as his fishers. There is a big distinction there. When (name) was on the Fish and Game Commission, did you ever get to talk to the man? He was scarce. People like Anderson, Anderson could talk to him anytime he wanted to. He would even take him out for lunch. You and I never could. That's what I am saying here. The game warden works with us. The people that make the rules and regulations, they only talk to the people with the big checkbooks in their pockets. There is the big difference.

Fishing, I have had no experience with the outfitters. But with hunting... you go up into National Forest and get to the end of a dead end road and here is a sign and a nice big campground for outfitters only. I don't think that is right and they ought not do it.

Firewood.

- Q.** *If I could write a report to take back to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service with some suggestions that they could share with other states around and even Montana, what could you tell me that I could write in that report?*

They ought to raise our license again. They should get another fish hatchery so we could plant these fish.

I think he was talking out-of-state.

You go to the northwestern part of Montana, the fishing isn't as good as it is here. Your fish grow slower and they don't have the feed because of the cold weather. I think they ought to have a more abundance of fish there (and so the fish hatchery would be a good idea).

I work with the doctors and we were talking about the rich earlier. They (the doctors) come to work and they tell me all these stories about the fishing and all that stuff and it seems like the people (the wardens) never question them (the doctors). But if me or my husband and my family go out, we get stopped. It seems like the people with more

money, the big-wigs, around this town get less flack. I don't think that because you are some doctor, you should get high priority over somebody else who is not a doctor. I don't think that's fair at all.

I think that is just a fact of life that we have to live with because it is that way in our public school systems and in our health care.

Yeah, but that's one of the problems that makes up the depressing part of fishing. It seems like that's not fair to us.

Q. *If you could say, "This is an idea that I had that would make fishing more pleasurable in the state of Montana," what would you say that would be?*

Simplifying the regulations. I mean, my kid can't understand half that book. He has to come and ask, "Can I do that?" and we are trying to teach our kids to have a good time and it's like they have to study for an hour before they can even go fish. So they really need to simplify that.

Maybe having the guys on the Board talk to more people like us. If they're thinking about changing something, they should find out what the people want.

They should ask a cross-section of the people.

Okay, I don't know who the U.S. Fish and Parks Service person is anymore, what his title is, but you would probably find out if you checked on who he is, that he is probably some friend of a senator or somebody who is very well to do, and that he got his appointment where he is from friends he knows. Not from his qualifications or anything else.

Or he contributed to the campaign contributions.

About all there is to it is to simplify the rules and regulations.

As a whole, it is not that bad. You can go out and do things.

You should have more public access fishing places. As it is now, you have to get a landowner's permission to cross his land to get to another man's land where you have permission. There has to be more public access. And of

course, the public has to respect the landowners. Fishing licenses are going up, buddy, so we can do all this stuff!

Along that line, that is for sure. And you don't know how to contact the landowner. You have an awful time finding out, well, who owns the land here. How do I get permission. You like to go fishing and, boy, that looks like a good spot, but nobody dares go there.

Some spots you can stand on the bank, but you are going at your own risk.

There's lots of times I'm just driving along and you see different cars out along the road and evidently it's all right.

A lot of people are buying up the land around here from either back east or out west and trying to hold it.

No way. It's closed off completely.

- Q.** What has the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks done in the past that you thought was a really good move?

Hatcheries. Stocking with eggs. They help restock the streams.

You have to have your regulations or else someone could catch 100 fish and throw 75 away.

- Q.** Do you think we are having a problem with people catching too many fish or maybe a little bit of overcrowding in the streams or lakes?

Actually, we have more population than we had 20 or 30 years ago and so this is going to continue. There is nothing you can do about it. With more people, it's going to be crowded. I think it is now overcrowded at certain times. On holidays, it is really overcrowded.

It's the same way in the streams. On Labor Day weekend and 3-day weekends, it's crowded.

- Q.** Has that stopped you from going?
I don't fish on weekends.

We used to go camping in junior high up at Beaver Creek. We'd go camping and take our fishing poles and just fish all day long. Fish wherever we wanted to, go wherever we wanted to, and now you run into more people. If you were to try that now, you couldn't do it. People would throw things at you and tell you to get out of there.

- Q.** *What other things do you think the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks could do to enhance fishing and get other people to start?*

There could be better approaches for the handicapped. Because I think that between here and Holden, there is only one place for the handicapped and that is Talfway Upton.

We need more campgrounds like Holter and Canyon Ferry. I noticed that recently the state has gotten involved with Canyon Ferry and now they are having problems and have to close it up because there is water pollution. The water wasn't clean and the toilets are not up to regulations and everything else and that is why a lot of people get discouraged. If we can't camp, we can't go.

The Fish and Game and the landowners need to have a better rapport. They should quit dictating to them (the landowners) what's going to happen and where it's going to go and why it's going to go there. Actually, it's like they're saying, "If you don't like it, then lump it." It's like, "Lump this, cowboy. Get your game off my land and we won't worry about it." It's our crops that are feeding their animals and our ponds they're fishing in. With the fishing, it wasn't such a big deal with us but it was with the hunting. With the fishing, we stocked our own pond and we could say what we were going to do with it. But they regulate you so much and they dictate to you what is going to happen and that is what the big stink is over in the eastern part of the state.

I personally do not go in Holter anymore. What I'm saying, that would probably get more people out. Holter is fairly

close and everybody is familiar with it. A lot of people can't afford to go up there for the weekend because you have to pay to park your car, your trailer, your friend's car, plus for your campground when you could stay at the Heritage for the weekend for probably less money than it's going to cost to go up there. They need to do something to get that price down because you are already paying taxes on your boat and trailer and so they should be taking that money and using it toward the campgrounds or whatever because the average family can't afford to go up there 3 or 4 weekends a month.

And they want to put in a toll road.

I've heard from some people that they want to turn it into some kind of a fancy resort and if you can afford it, then you can get in. But for those of us that live here, we are the ones that are left out and I don't think that is right.

I think they should have a fishermen's day like they have a comedians' day for the families. Toll free. Give them a few of that for a year.

Let everybody fish for free, whether they have a license or not.

What's that couple of bucks for a fishing license anyway? It just doesn't get it. I mean, the looseness of getting it and forgetting it and then you get put down and treated like a criminal.

I think there should be more campgrounds and quit raising the price.

Maybe they should have fishing derbys to get the kids involved. A kid, if they won even 5 or 10 bucks, would be happy. Not to mention the fact that if they catch a fish, that's a lot of excitement for them.

Q. *Is there anyone else in here that has drifted away from fishing? Do most of you regularly go fishing? If you met someone who had drifted away, what would you say to get them back into fishing?*

Invite them to go with you.

Tell them fishing is something you can do by yourself, you

*don't need anyone else to go with you.
Leave the wife at home. My wife, she likes to fish though.*

- Q. Is cooking and eating outdoors a pleasurable thing?
*Yeah, because my husband does it. He doesn't cook at home.
Yeah, because I like the smell of it.*

- Q. What do you do with your fish when you bring them home?
*Freeze them.
Eat them.
Share with neighbors and the older folks that can't go
anymore.
Can them and use them like tuna fish.*

- Q. Which does your family like better: fish from the store or
fish that you caught?
I don't buy fish in the store.

- Q. What else do you like about fishing?
*There is one thing I don't like. That's the cleanup.
I like coming home after fishing.*

- Q. If the Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks on a state or
federal level were to hold open forums, what would you ask
them?
*I think the Fish and Game of Montana ought to have town
meetings and have an open forum.
We should hash out some of the problems we have like loners,
guides and stuff like that.
I think mostly too they need to have a better rapport. We
should talk about getting permission from landowners. We
should talk about respect for the landowner. I think they
should ask what needs to be addressed. Send out forms of
format and let people fill them out.
The Commission should send out a paper. The people need to
know more about what is going on.
Maybe they should send out surveys with the license about*

regulations and permission from landowners and asking for opinions.

They should ask us how many people would go fishing if it were simplified.

They should send out a survey and ask the people 5 things that they think are important. Then they should prioritize the 5 items and address the items.

If I were them, my first question would be: How can we make better access to fishing in the state of Montana or the United States? My second question would be: How can we make them more readily available on an everyday basis?

My first question on a questionnaire would be regarding the landowners.

I'd ask them about 5 problems they are having now with our present situation. Our present situation is people not fishing. The continual fighting between the fisherman and the landowners and the government and the landowners.

Moderator's Analysis

Purpose of the Study

This study was conducted to determine the satisfaction derived throughout a lifetime of fishing.

The discussion outline was divided into 5 major categories: Fishing History, Satisfaction, Concerns, Present Activities, and Future Plans.

Research Design

The information for this project was gathered using a Qualitative Focus Group Discussion.

A good mix of respondents was obtained, with a representation of frequent, occasional, and infrequent anglers. In addition to the men respondents, two women anglers were also present.

Methodology

A discussion outline was designed to cover the historical experiences of fishing. The experiences were from the early learning process of being a student to evolving into teacher. Lifetimes of pleasurable memories of experiences with family and friends were discussed, along with other satisfying results of fishing.

Fishing: A Three-Generational Memory Building Experience Student - User - Teacher

Student: Who taught you to fish?

On my very first trip, I got the hired hand out and went and got dad so he didn't have to work.

My grandfather taught me to fish, he was the best fisherman in the State of Montana. Some of my fondest memories are being

with him when we were fishing. I've fished all over since then, and have done a lot of different kinds of fishing.

A mixture of family and friends taught me.

My grandpa taught me how to fish. I remember the first trip well.

I was 7 years old, and was sitting toward the back of my grandfather's brand new boat. Another boat was going past us, and a hook went in my shoulder and ripped out at the same time.

I was with my father in Minnesota, when I was about 11 or 12 years old. It was my first fishing trip. It was fun to sit and relax, catching one once in awhile.

Most of the time it was with the family. We threw everything in the car and just took off.

When my dad got a new boat, he took us all out to the lake, and taught us how to bass fish. It was fun. The excitement, you really have to pay attention, because they really fight.

My uncle and aunt took us, my brother and I. We would always fight to see who got to sleep in the truck with my uncle.

Sleeping out was just as much fun as fishing. We always fooled around and did stuff. If we weren't fishing, we were playing catch or football. Just doing other things in the outdoors.

About 10 or 11 years old, I learned with my brother to sneak up on suckers and grab them. We just figured it out. We got away from work a little then.

It was in the "dirty thirties" and it was pretty tough going. We had to work in the garden, it was fun getting away, and we had a swimming hole there. It was a break away. Parents were at the farm, and didn't go.

Fishing today and then was for leisure time and fun.

An old friend taught me to leave my hands off other peoples' fish.

I was about 6 or 7 years old, and went to Smith River. They caught a nice one, about 6-1/2 or 7 pounds. They had a stringer and I had to play with it. I had to take it off the stringer to see how it would flop. I learned what the hand was for if you don't leave somebody else's fish alone.

My best friend and I used to go fishing all the time in a boat.

Most of the time it was with the family. We threw everything in

the car and just took off. Have good memories of that.

Other Fun Experiences

Just being away from the public. Just being out meditating.

Like to get away from work or home, and get some leisure time.

Just get tired of it sometimes, just need to get out for a change. I feel good when I get back and my mind is cleared.

It's a way to meet your buddies. We meet every year at Canyon Ferry. They come from Seattle, Havre, Idaho, Wyoming, and here.

Other fun is drinking beer. We boat and waterski. We used to go spring snow skiing at Glacier Park. As we grew apart, we needed to get something a little less expensive.

Spending time with your children and parents. Special memories mean a lot. I can think back, even while I'm fishing, and have your memory and day dream. You have that for the rest of your life.

Just being together. Just the fact my dad worked all the time. It was an "alone" time we could all be together.

Just being away from town. Hustle and bustle of the city. Get out and relax. Can't put up with it all the time. Gotta relax somehow.

Just enjoy getting away from the kids. They are constantly calling, wanting us to baby sit. So when we get away and go camping, it gives us a chance to clear our heads. We talk about what we want to do during the coming week.

Teaching the grandkids is fun. Excitement. One grandkid just throws the line out all day. The other one just sits all day and waits to hook it.

Must remember to take your camera. You get those fish together, to take a picture and prove whose fish is the biggest.

We go every chance we get. You can always tell if people have had a rest. They are not as up-tight and not stressed out. Once I get in the mountains, I have to be forced out. You're not as stressed out and things don't get to you quite as bad.

My kids get to see a lot of wildlife, bears and stuff. There are kids that never get out of town. My kids can go to school on

Monday and say, "I saw a bear over the weekend." A lot of kids don't get out.

Last year we took 2 boats out, a water skiing boat and a big cruiser. We decided to have a little contest. We split up, and went in the 2 boats. After we got back on shore, we said, "How big a fish did you get?" They were saying we got 2 or 3 pounds or so. We said the biggest we got was 4 or 5 inches. They were laughing at us until I said, "But the 4 or 5 inches is the measuring between the eyes."

Teacher

Teaching your own kids is just as much fun as actually catching fish. Having them grab the pole, and seeing their faces light up.

Teaching grandkids is fun. You just have to teach them. Their parents don't take time. It's enjoyable to teach them. It's a joy watching them.

My son-in-law farms and works a lot. If it wasn't for my wife and I, the grandkids would never get out of town.

I took a boy fishing that had never been. We went fishing at night and could see fish in the water by the boat with a flash light. One of the fish jumped in the boat, and that boy got "hooked" on fishing. You could hardly keep him away from it then.

Compare Today's Fishing as to When You Were a Child

Hasn't changed any. Just as much fun. I'm retired, and can go 2 or 3 times a week. Just love to get out, in the water and the boat.

It's easier to relax. As a kid I was here and there. Now I just like to sit there. Sometimes I just like to throw it out and sit there.

You learn to sit and relax when you're doing it. It's a break away from the telephone and kids. You find you're not so short tempered.

Anymore it's a family affair. We got the grandkids. My one son comes down from Alaska. Their kids are plumb wild about it. They don't seem to get out much. Their dad works pretty hard. When they do go out, it's for salmon. When they come

down here and we make it a family affair. They get to do some things they ordinarily wouldn't do.

I look at things differently now, because I have my own family. I see my daughter fishing, with her pole, and it makes me realize how my parents looked at it when I was a kid. My brother and sister and I were out there, throwing rocks in the water when we were supposed to be quiet. I know now why they wanted us to be quiet.

I am building happy memories for my children, just like I have happy memories built for me.

I had fun learning, and am now experiencing the fun of teaching. It didn't use to bother me to touch the worms when I was a kid, but now it gives me the "heebie jeebies". My husband does it for me.

Kids nowadays grow and learn faster. I like watching the grandkids.

Didn't have camping trailers then. Now I've got one and can go anytime I want. Only have to have permission from my wife now.

The lakes are overcrowded on holiday weekends.

Streams are getting overcrowded on 3-day weekends, but that doesn't stop me from fishing.

When we were in junior high, we used to go fishing all day and we didn't see a lot of people. Now there are a lot of people.

Is fishing as much fun now as then?

No, there are too many restrictions. Fish are smaller now than they were.

Have to keep a regulation book with you, because of all the size and type restrictions. You don't mean to be doing anything wrong, and then all of a sudden, hey, there you go- you're in trouble.

There's so much there, you don't know it all, have to keep that book with you, and it changes so often. If you cross the fence, and go to the next side of the fence, the rules can change.

One side can be certain sections of the river, it can be this or that. Wherever it is, it can be all different. Catch and release only,

fly fishing only, or whatever.

Problems with the landowners. People go through the fences and don't put the gates back-up. Leaving the gates open causes a lot of pain and heartache to the landowners.

If they get tired of fishing, they start climbing the hills which tears up the pastureland.

Ways Fishing Is Fun

It's fun getting ready to go. Exciting.

While fishing, while camping it's fun and it feels good when we get home. You've had time to relax, and clear your mind.

It's a break away from work, home, telephone, and babysitting the grandkids.

It's pleasurable eating your own fish that you caught.

It's enjoyable teaching others to fish and sharing fish with others.

It's just like coming home.

Do regulations influence you to fish less?

Some restrictions are needed. They need to be standardized. In Holter Lake you are allowed to catch 3 in one area, and 5 in another. In another area of the state it can be 6.

Have to have that book right with you. There's so much there, you can't memorize it. It's all different for everything. Most obvious is the type of bait, like you can't use suckers at Holter. Used to do that all the time.

Need to downgrade some of the issues, and not be so extreme. You can't know it all, there's so much.

In a couple of years, it'll be like hunting, you'll have to have an outfitter or you can't go fishing.

Just live with the regulations and keep going anyway.

Going up into the National Forest and at the end of the road, seeing a camp ground with a sign that says for outfitters only, I don't think that's right. We should all be able to use the National Forest the same.

Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks

Fish and Game can have a little better attitude. Very few come up

and talk a little, like "How's it going today" and then ask to see your license.

Define Fish and Game. Are we talking about the Commission that only listens to the big business people, or are we talking about the game warden that only looks at the little people, when they're fishing. Big distinction there.

When (name) was on the Fish and Game Commission, I was never able to talk to the man. He was very scarce. (name), you could talk to him anytime you wanted to, you could even take him out to lunch.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife person is probably some friend of a Senator, and got appointed because of that and not because of his qualifications.

Good Things about the Fish, Wildlife and Parks Department

Hatcheries and re-stocking the streams. They have to have the regulations or some people would catch a lot and throw them away.

What About Outfitters?

Guiders get first choice when they can float the river and we have to wait. I don't think that's fair.

It's a pain in the ass to have everything we do regulated.

The outfitters need to make a living, but also it's a right of mine to be able to enjoy the same thing. I'm told I can't fish today because the guide took his crew down. He gets a choice and I don't. I don't agree with that.

Lake fishers aren't concerned with the outfitters, because they go on the rivers.

We went to the river one day with some friends, and were told we couldn't go on it because there were already people on it. The Fish and Game told us, under the new rule. Disappointing to travel 30 miles and then can't do it.

Doctors never seem to get questioned by the game wardens. I work for some doctors and they tell us about things they get to do. I don't think that's right. They should be treated the same as my family. Just because they are a doctor or

someone big, they get treated different, and I don't think that's fair.

Fishing Equipment

Equipment is a lot better. It used to be a willow stick and a hook for a pole.

Just looking for something new is fun. Always have to try something new to see if I'm going to get that big one I'm still looking for.

It's nice picking up your own fish hooks and stuff.

Everybody gets and likes to look at fishing catalogs.

I think men like to look and shop for fishing equipment as much or more than women do clothes.

Depth finder, fish finder.

It's nice to get out and relax and feel satisfaction.

Toys, that's what's more expensive about fishing, not a \$0.50 leader.

Only difference between men and boys is the price of their toys.

What keeps you from fishing?

The rain.

The economy, just the cost. I inherited \$4,000 worth of fishing equipment, so I didn't have to buy anything for numerous years. Price tags from \$0.25 years ago is now \$4 or so.

Haven't fished for a while, because my wife doesn't like to fish, and my fishing friends moved away or died.

Work. Time. Job.

Money is the main part with me. I only collect Social Security, and the licenses cost money.

Trying to get enough money for deer and fishing is hard.

They may be going to put a toll road on to Holter. They are trying to turn Holter into a fancy resort. For the ones that live here, I don't think that's right.

Have different priorities now. When I was a kid, I had more time to go, but have more home responsibilities than before.

Have you replaced fishing with another activity?

*Some, with golf and target shooting.
I do more water skiing, golfing, and laying around than before.
Developed a new hobby. TV, video games, woodworking, and
Eagle's Lodge.*

What would interest you to start again?

Not much, I still have my equipment.

What could be done to encourage drift-away anglers to fish again?

Invite them to go with you.

Wife needs to like to go fishing.

*I like to go because my husband usually cooks, and he doesn't
cook at home.*

I like the smell of cooking outdoors.

What Do You Do with Fish When You Bring Them Home?

*Freeze them. Eat them. Store them. Can them and use for
casseroles. Share them with others that can't go fishing
anymore.*

*It's more enjoyable than fish bought in the store. I don't buy fish
in the store.*

Which do you prefer, lake or stream fishing?

Note: This group has of a mixture of stream and lake anglers.

Lake fishing is the most fun. Trolling is fun.

Ideas to Make Fishing More Pleasurable in Montana

*My son can't understand the regulations book. He has to come
and ask. We try to teach our kids to have a good time, and
they have to study before they can go fish.*

Simplify the rules and regulations.

*Have the Board talk to more people like us. Have them talk to
people like us if they are thinking about changing something.*

*I want them to raise the license again so we can get another fish
hatchery. In the northwest part of the state the fishing is not
as good as it is here. They need a hatchery to keep the
streams stocked. The fish grow slower and they don't have the*

*feed. They need more abundant life.
As a whole fishing isn't that bad.
Better public access, and the public has to respect the landowners.
We need to be able to find out how to contact the landowner.
Have an awful time finding out who owns the land and how
you can get there.
Fishing needs to be more simple to do. It's too complicated and
gets out of scope.
People from out-of-state buy the land, and then it's hard to get to
them to ask permission.
I think the Fish and Game should have meetings in communities in
Montana. Hash out things in the state with guides and the
landowners, they need a better rapport.
Lake fishers don't have the problem. But on the river, we have to
go through property and get written permission to do so.
A forum should address getting permission from the landowners.
Fish and Game needs to stay out of it. Leave it to the
landowner to determine who to let on by telling them.
Respect the landowner.*

Topics to Address at a Forum

*Send out forms beforehand and see what people would like to see
addressed. Don't have a problem enough to want to address
it.
Send out questionnaires about proposals.
Have a questionnaire stapled to a license when they are bought.
Need to have more things like this focus group, and get it to the
paper. Let people know. Get more information out to the
public.*

To Enhance Families

*Hotter is close, but you can't afford to go up there for the weekend
to pay for camping. Already paying taxes on boat and trailer,
the average family can't afford to go several weekends a
month.
Have a fishermen's day for the family, a free weekend or a free
day. A family day, let everybody fish for free whether they*

have a license or not.

More campgrounds and quit raising the prices.

Sponsor some fishing derbies for kids.

Fishing Needs

Need better approaches for the handicapped. Only 1 between Great Falls and Holter Lake.

Need more campgrounds at Holter and Canyon Ferry with better access. Toilets aren't clean and pollutes the water. Then close them up.

Fish and Game and landowners need to have a better rapport. The Fish and Game Department should quit dictating what's going to happen. Fishing isn't such a deal, it's the hunting.

Composition of the Most Frequent References of the Group

The most frequent mention and references to good memories of the adults who fished as children who were in this focus group study was having undivided time and attention with their parents.

Fishing trips were opportunities to enjoy the outdoors, but were also viewed as quality time and an opportunity to bond with others.

Fishing relieves stress, and provides a fresh perspective on life in general.

Other benefits mentioned were: eating outdoors; seeing wildlife; eating the fish; teaching children and watching the joy in their faces as they learn; and sharing the catch with those persons who can no longer go fishing.

The most frequent complaints were: the regulations are too inconsistent and the book is too complicated and needs to be made more user friendly. The book is especially difficult for the youth to understand.

The cost of using campgrounds in conjunction with the expense of

buying equipment, and paying taxes on boats, etc. was also mentioned as a fishing-related problem, along with the life-long tension between landowners and those persons using the outdoors for recreation purposes.

Researchers' Analysis

This group consisted of casual anglers, mainly lake fishing anglers and anglers who fish from boats. However, several also fished in streams and were involved with fly fishing. This was a fairly mixed group in terms of general levels of avidity.

The attitudes toward fishing in this group were centered around issues of casual recreation, especially as it related to the family. The major attitude here was naturalistic. Most of these people received satisfaction from being outdoors and enjoying nature rather than fishing per se.

(Fishing) is like meditating. Just being away from the public. I have a family now and I just watch my daughter playing with her pole. I look at it now like my parents looked at it when they watched my brother and me.

Now that my kids are fishing I can sort of see what my parents felt like when I was a kid.

My grandfather taught me... he was one of the best fishermen in Montana.

(Fishing) was a way to get out of work.

My dad wasn't into fishing... we'd go out all the time with my uncle and my aunt. My brother and I would fight over who got to sleep with my uncle. If we weren't out fishing, we were with my uncle doing (other things).

I got the biggest kick out of sneaking up on (fish)... we just sort of figured it out on our own.

It's a way to meet your buddies... drinking beer, other stuff.

It's a way of getting back to nature, the way it use to be but isn't anymore.

It's a way to relax and think about what you have to do the coming week.

My kids get to see a lot of wildlife, bears and stuff. Lots of kids never get to see wildlife, never get out of town.

When we go fishing, it's a family affair. My one son comes down from Alaska... his kids go crazy, like they never get

to go fishing up there.

(Fishing) is a way for people who don't have (money) to do things... they can't afford a movie, but you can get a pole and a hook at a rummage sale.

Catching fish, the number of fish and the size of fish caught did not play an important part in this group's fishing satisfactions, although they seemed to feel that there were less fish and smaller fish than in the past.

I just like to get out there... I'm retired and I go 2 or 3 times a week.

You used to get 20 fish or more and they were big fish.

I don't know if it makes a difference in the amount of fish.

This group displayed some negative attitudes towards the state agency. Ideas that "rich" people had more influence than the average citizen were expressed. The members of this group did not feel that the state agency listened to their interests or were concerned with their opinions. Another issue raised was the perception that guides received preferential treatment in the regulations.

I've had very few of (the state agency personnel) treat me like a human being.

Are we talking about the Fish and Game Commission who only listen to the rich people or the game wardens who only listen to the little people?

If you drive up in a big caddy they'll listen to you.

It seems like the doctors and the rich people never get questioned by (game wardens) and I don't think that's fair... it makes fishing depressing and that's not fair.

(The agency) should get out and talk to more people like us... find out what the people want.

The guides get first choice to float (the river)... the rest of us have to wait our turn and I don't think that's fair. It may be a right of those people to earn a living, but I have a right to enjoy the same thing.

Another negative issue or disvalue was the cost of fishing, exclusive of the cost of a fishing license. These costs seemed to center around general issues of the economy and not directly on fishing. However, it is worth noting that the subject seemed to have a great deal of salience for this group.

The economy (keeps me from going fishing). I'm just too busy... work of course.

Things cost so much now.

Finding the time and money to (go fishing is a problem).

Finding money for the gear and the license.

The average family can't afford to go (fishing) on weekends.

If you're wealthy you can afford to go (fishing); those of us who live here are left out.

The cost of the license, that's nothing... it's just the nuisance and you feel put down, they treat you like a criminal.

Other negative issues were crowding, access and complexity of regulations. The last issue seemed to be of most importance to this group. Most of the reasons given for not fishing centered around issues of the family and other outdoor recreational activities.

Some weekends you can walk across the lake from boat to boat.

I never go on weekends.

We're trying to teach our kids to have good time and they have to study (the regulation book) for an hour before they can go.

They should simplify the regulations.

It's a pain in the ass to have everything we do regulated.

The regulations have got so restrictive.

You can't just go park anywhere anymore, you don't mean to be doing something wrong.

You have to have (the regulations) with you all the time and it changes so often... catch and release only, fly fish only.

There has to be some sort of regulation.

They could be more standardized... some places you can catch 4, some places 5.

*Just the fact that you have to have that book with you, you
have to know what's what... you can't remember all of it.
I got involved with Eagle's Lodge.
I've taken up woodworking.
We do a lot more water skiing.
You have to do more things around the house... mowing the
lawn.
You have to do things that the kids used to do and they aren't
home now (to do the chores).
We need more handicapped access.*

Site II • Seattle, Washington
November 9, 1993

Transcription: Anglers and Ex-Anglers

Demographic Characteristics

mixed group of active and inactive anglers.

3 white females, 6 white males

white male moderator

- Q.** Why don't you just tell us a little bit about yourself and about your fishing activity?

I'm a student at the University, and I have not fished in years because it is just not very accessible to me, as a person without a car. I used to fish a lot in Oregon when I lived with my dad. And we'd fish frequently. About once a month, or twice a month. I've lived in Washington about 3 years; since I've been in school.

I'm a soon-to-be graduate student. And I fished a lot when I was growing up with my dad. And now I fish when I see my dad, which is probably about 2 or 3 times a year, when he comes over to this side of the state. He lives in Tri Cities in Richland, Washington, 200 miles that way (east). When I was growing up we did a lot of lake and river fishing, trout, catfish that kind of thing. But, now we go salmon fishing.

I work for a sales training group, consulting firm. And I do some training, development and we consult with businesses in training people, giving them stronger sales backgrounds

and stuff. My fishing, the extent of my fishing, is going out into the Sound trying to catch a few salmon here and there every once in a while. I went marlin fishing once in Latin America, Central America with some guys; caught a 300-pound black marlin. Only took 2-1/2 hours. But I didn't do it myself, believe me, it took a few other people to assist. Tiring operation. But other than that it was fun. I think I'm going to learn how to fly fish.

But you don't fly fish for salmon?

No.

But can you? I mean, do people do that?

No, not for salmon. I don't think so. Trout and bass.

I'm a printer. I like to travel. And I like to fish. I like to backpack and fish. I have a couple of backpacking rods I take with me. And otherwise, drink beer in my time off. I do backpacking in Washington. Go up to some little lakes. See what I can troll in.

I work for a help desk/computer consulting firm. I fished a lot when I was growing up, but I haven't really fished that much in the last couple of years. I fished mostly along the East Coast, not really much here in the Sound.

I work at an engineering consulting firm, with computers and information retrieval. And I fished a lot as a kid in Wisconsin, and I fished a little bit here, inland, not saltwater fishing. I'm kind of a lazy fisherman. I put a worm or minnow on a hook and drop it in. I don't have the patience for fly fishing.

I've lived in Seattle for 3 years. The last time I went fishing was in the spring time and I was fishing for bass and actually I only cast a line a couple of times. We went up to St. Alpine lakes and I was backpacking by myself and someone was nice enough to let me just waste a couple of minutes casting. But it wasn't anything I had planned on doing.

I'm a civil engineer. And I've been here about 3 years also. Most of my fishing has been on the East Coast for blue fish. I've done some lake trout up here. And that's what

I've done fishing-wise.

I was born and raised here in western Washington. Fished pretty much when I was growing up with my dad like most people. Mostly lake and stream fishing. When I got older, I found a group of friends to go salmon fishing with, down around Park Steam, Anderson Island. Caught a few fish down there, but it's been about 8 or 10 years since I went fishing.

I just go fishing anywhere there are fish. As long as you can eat something. I don't mind going anywhere, saltwater, lakes, rivers.

Q. But tell me why, what do you get out of fishing? How did you all get started fishing? What got you started fishing?

My dad. He was a fishing fanatic. When I got a little older he got a bigger boat. We'd go out on the Sound once and a while and he did it every chance he got. That's how I learned it. After I grew up and started doing it on my own, I just liked the thrill of that jerk on the line. It's exciting to reel one in. That's, I guess, why most people fish.

How come you haven't done it in 8 or 9 years?

I just haven't had the opportunity. I lived in New York for a while and traveled around and I just never seem to come back to any opportunities to do it. My dad is deceased. I always fished with my dad, as long as I can remember. Probably before I could walk. Went out on the boat.

I got buddies who do it, just for fun. My folks live on Bainbridge Island. They've got a row boat. We go out there and my dad has some rod and reels, and my brother and I go out and cast for salmon. It was never a serious endeavor, just for fun. You don't spend a lot of money doing it. It's never been a hobby. You just go out.

Just for the outdoors and some time out.

Drink some beers on the boat, have a good time. In Latin America it was the same thing. Went with some guys, my real father lives in Guatemala, and we went on a fishing

*boat. And a couple of us struck gold. Got a big bite.
That was fun. Got some dolphin fish.*

And you can't catch those sort of fish around here?

*No. They're warm water fish. Catch them on the Atlantic
and south.*

- Q.** What about the catching of fish? You talked about that. When you go fishing, is that what you're looking for when you go fishing?

Yeah, I'm looking at getting a dinner or lunch out of it. It's not like pure sport. But if they're not big enough I throw them back.

- Q.** Where do you go fishing?

Back East, there was always a lake or pond, so there'd be some place close to where I live. Here you pretty much have to go some place. I've trolled in Lake Washington, but it's like when you go on a sailboat you just throw a line over and if you get something that's OK, but not specifically for fishing. Other than that, you go out camping or hiking and you go to places and go fishing there. Whereas back East, where I was working we had a restaurant in New Jersey and there was a jetty a few blocks away. Here you have to make an excursion out of it. Like if you want to go for salmon or something, you usually go out to the mouth of a river or pretty far out, or out on a boat. So, it's not just picking up your rod and walking 4 miles down to the pond or the nearest jetty.

- Q.** Where do you go fishing here?

I've only fished a few times here, out by Mt. Rainier for trout. I think part of it for me is familiarity. Because I grew up in Wisconsin. It's probably similar fishing here. But it just seems like there's a lot more inland freshwater there, and here it's more saltwater and going out on a boat for salmon, which I don't know that much about.

I've fished here a few times, mostly for bottom fish and

halibut, up in this pass area. I'm not much of a salmon eater.

In terms of fishing I go out just about any place I can. Usually carry my fly rod, because some places are fly rod only. And I carry my backpack rod and I go up to Deception Pass, not Alpine lakes per se, but that general area there's some easily accessible lakes. Going out to private bass ponds, out on Sammamish plateau. Yeah, I go out specifically to go fishing. I may go out to do other things along with it. Say if I go out to eastern Washington, there's some other things I may be out there looking for along with the fishing. Go out to Yakima, score produce and things like that when I'm out there. When I go out I am primarily looking for a bit of relaxation, clean air, a little exercise.

Q. What about the fish?

I'd certainly love to catch them, because I love to eat them. But, you know, even if I don't...being on the water, that's relaxing as it is.

Q. I guess catching them is the best part?

Yes, absolutely.

It's that hooking one and reeling them in.

It's a good source of food.

And the fish is good, too. Eat everything you catch, by the way. That's what I've done. Even when I caught that marlin, I ate it.

Q. What about your fishing?

It's almost all ocean fishing for blue fish, like Amy. A lot of blue fish, in the East.

Q. What are blue fish?

They're fish that tear your arm off. Saltwater fish and God do they fight.

- Q. Many of you have talked about salmon fishing. I don't know much about that. You say you go salmon fishing?
Yeah, I went salmon fishing with my dad. I didn't do that when I was growing up but in the last couple of years my dad has come over and decided to go salmon fishing. I just kind of went along.
- Q. Where do you go?
Off the sound and the strait.
- Q. What is it, the strait?
*Between Canada and. .
Strait of Juan de Fuca.
Yeah, up there.*
- Q. So, it's pretty easy to go salmon fishing then?
*Yeah, just get your license and a boat.
Are we allowed to catch salmon in the sound, though?
Yeah, you can, but they're really scarce though.
Well, I thought, there used to be a 2-fish limit last time I went.
It still is a 2-fish limit.*
- Q. Where, everywhere?
*In the sound.
Yeah, even sport fishing off the coast, still 2. By Westport.
I did that once, where you go out on a boat,
charter a boat with a bunch of people and
they give you all the equipment and
everything.
(They) bait your hook and clean your fish (for you).
I just sit there and...*
- Q. But that's not terribly expensive, is it something anyone can do?
*It is expensive, yeah. The whole excursion is expensive, yeah.
But if you catch a couple of fish, it's worth it. You make*

up your money, basically.

- Q. So, in other words, if you think you can go out, 2 fish is fine, even though it's 60 bucks?

Well you end up with your 2 fish, because if you don't catch them someone else does. At least that's the way it was when I went, it was 6 or 7 years ago, and that's OK, as long as everybody comes back with 1 or 2.

- Q. I'm just asking because I don't know anything about it.

It might be pseudo-legal. You know.

- Q. All salmon fishing is you've got to go out in a boat and do it?

Yeah.

Netting is only on the reservations for natives.

- Q. So, I've got to keep this straight. You CAN do salmon fishing other than going out on a boat?

Yeah you can, in Alaska when I was...

It might be very difficult (here in Washington). Maybe off a pier. They're pretty much deep water fish.

- Q. But none of you seem to object too much to that. Is that alright? Do you ever go out on a boat for salmon?

Hardly ever. Last couple of trips we just got them out of the mouth of the Hood River. Catch them when they're coming in.

- Q. So, you can just catch them at the mouth of the river?

Yeah at the Columbia, too.

- Q. After you fish, what is the thing that you get out of it? What's the thing you look back on fishing and say, this is what I got out of it?

I just remember it as something to do that's real fun with my family. It's usually just my dad and my sister and I. And we really liked going out. I think not even catching fish

was fun, just being out in the fresh air, with water.

Q. *Why aren't you doing it anymore?*

It's kind of inaccessible to me. I don't know anyone really up in Seattle who goes fishing at all. I know people who go camping, so I tend to do that a lot more often. And I don't have any fishing gear anymore. It's all in Oregon and I didn't bring it up with me. Well, you'd have to carry a pole and different lures and things like that, that just seems like too much stuff to carry.

Q. *When you look back on it, what is it that fishing...?*

The last time I went fishing, I didn't really like catching anything. I just wanted to sit out in the boat, with the sunset. It was early spring, but it was very warm. This was in Oklahoma. And it was really calm. And I cast, and I cast out 6 times and I caught something 4 times. So, I was getting a little bummed out, it was turning into effort at that point. I wanted to have a good time. I ended up cutting throats of the bass (accidentally, with the hooks) and throwing them back in, because I just didn't want them. It turned into a bit of a pain and I got back and said I didn't catch anything at all. The thing that discourages me now is not knowing the rules. If I want to catch something up in the Alpine lakes and go by a pier or something, I wouldn't know if I can keep one. I don't necessarily know the rules surrounding that. As well, I don't know the rules. ...It seems like there's an unspoken law of the land when it comes to fishing, I think. Sometimes you have to know if you're going to bring your salmon eggs, this power lure or that power lure, or a flashing this, that, there are so many secrets I think that people want to keep, just hold or retain. I've got to spend 6 to 8 months of serious fishing in order to figure out my rules, to get my little mystery out of it, to get my little secrets out of it. To me, that seems exhausting. So, there's this spiritual thing that I'm not ready to get into.

So, if I'm ready just to cast and not catch anything, then I shouldn't put a hook on the thing. I should just cast and sit there. Just have a great time. That's part of the enchantment if you ask me, sitting back and listening to all the sounds. Yeah, I guess it's fun sometimes. But I'm just going to rip his throat apart and throw him back in again.

Q. How did you start fishing again?

Well, I had a cousin who said let's go throw something into the brook. Get some brook trout or something. And we did that and that was fun. We cut things up. I fished with my father a couple of times.

Q. What would it take for you to go fishing in Washington state?

To know that everything I did was by the book, know that I was going with someone who could tell some fish stories, some big fish stories, and tell me what I need to know. So, I know what I'm doing, that I'm doing the right thing. Be able to catch something and know I was going to be able to catch something and basically get some good recipes. And basically that's it.

Q. About these rules, is it really hard to find that out? Is it complicated? Are the rules really hard to understand?

It's probably very easy.

It's probably on the license, isn't it?

Not really, just really restrictive. There are a lot of places where you can't use live bait or double hooks. And it would be a good rig to use, because that is what the fish would eat.

Q. Where, for example, could you not use live bait? What do you mean by live bait, by the way?

Worms. Minnows. Salmon are kind of predatory, and if they see smaller salmon they'll eat them. So they have a better chance of filling up the gene pool with their own. What I normally do is to go somewhere where there are some fry,

salmon fry and take them to where you want to go fishing and double hook those because they'll strike at those. We end up having to use lures and eggs.

- Q. So, you can't use live bait for salmon anywhere?

In the rivers as far as I know.

- Q. Joe, you sound like you fish a little bit, but not a whole lot. Right?

Well, when you fish for blue fish you just use shiners. Here in Washington, with bottom fishing, it's just basically cut up herring and stuff like that.

- Q. Amy you said you were no longer fishing, but you used to?

No, I still fish. But I mainly fish in the East, blue fish also. I have fished for trout here, and we use eggs for that. Besides, I've only done lake trout out here. Trout is also a big fish out here besides salmon.

- Q. What would it take to get you to go fishing more often?

Give me a nice reel, just something that works well.

- Q. Is that the major thing for you, the equipment? What did you fish with before?

My family has reels. Two years ago I bought a reel to go fishing but every time I cast it, it got snagged up. So I need to be a little more educated about what works well there. If someone gave me a rod and said let's go I'd go in a second. And sometimes I do go. It's hard being in a city and going out. I think if I lived in the country I'd go more.

- Q. Do you know places to go fishing?

Yeah some.

- Q. Do all of you know of places you can go fishing?

Sure.

Q. It's not a problem finding a place to go fishing?

Not in western Washington. You can't step without stepping in a place to go fishing.

Q. But you haven't gone in 8 or 10 years.

No. It takes a lot, you know. You have to have a license and ideally a boat and a way to transport your boat. And in my case a baby sitter, equipment and time, you know, to get out and do it.

Q. Tell me about 2 things, what about the license, what does it cost?

\$14 plus saltwater tags and steelhead tags.

Q. What are those?

With a basic license you can fish for everything but salmon or steelhead and ocean fish. Then you have to buy a \$3 stamp to get the privilege to fish for salmon and steelhead. I think it's another \$14 or \$15.

Q. What's steelhead?

It's kind of a subspecies of a trout, ocean going.

They go to the ocean and come back to the rivers. Like salmon and steelhead.

I thought steelhead were salmon?

I thought it was a cross between a trout and a salmon. I've heard people say both.

There's a separate regulation for them.

There are different jurisdictions. I think one is State Department of Fisheries. I think salmon and ocean fishing are under a different jurisdiction. I'm not quite sure of that.

Q. You're fishing regularly?

Yeah, once every 3 or 4 weeks, all year round.

Q. What would keep you from going fishing?

*Well, I'm going to school at night. That cuts into playtime.
I have other conflicting interests.*

- Q.** What if the license was \$30?

I'd still go.

I have a question. How long is the license for?

A year.

From the time you purchase it?

No.

So, if I buy one this month that would be stupid.

Yeah.

So, if I want to go back and do it...

You can buy a day license.

*I think they're for 1 or 2 days, and I think with those you can
fish for anything.*

- Q.** If that were the case, and you could go out there and get a 1-day or 5-day license, or let's say you could get a license that was good for 5 days and cost \$2, would you go fishing?

Well, I did that with my dad. Then later on I'd start weighing it out. OK, I see myself doing this every once in a while and I find myself in a particular time in the year, well it makes sense for me to buy one then I would put it off and say I'm not going to do this. It would be something that would dissuade me from doing it I suppose.

- Q.** What is the major thing that is keeping you from doing it?

Besides the peer, I mean, to have someone to do it with, to say, this is great, let's do it. You know, the close friend to do it with. So, I guess I'm stopping myself from doing it. I feel I DO have a couple out there who I can say, you want to start fishing sometimes. I guess it would be equipment and knowing the rules.

- Q.** Let's say on an average day of fishing, at the end of the day, what would you say to yourself to decide whether or not that was a good or bad day?

If I'm out there it's a good day. So I haven't had a bad day if I'm out fishing. The places that you go and the places that you see because everything is just so beautiful around here.

It's nice to just go out there. A lot of times you just go fishing because it's so quiet. You just go to relax. It's nice.

For me it's the thrill of catching that fish. If I catch my limit, I've had a good time.

For me, that's inherent, what you just said.

Q. I guess what I'm trying to get at is, would you be willing to catch all the fish you want in an ugly, crowded place?
No.

Q. But if you went to a beautiful, uncrowded place and you didn't catch anything. What about that?
I'd still go, but I wouldn't enjoy it as much.

Q. What if it was a 1-salmon limit?

Oh, I'd probably still go.

Yeah, I'd probably still go, I'd go because my dad was visiting and he just loves to fish.

You can just go out in a boat or in the woods to enjoy yourself. But if you're out there to catch fish, you're out there to catch fish. You've got all your equipment out there, you've got your bait. You've gone to all the trouble and hopefully it pays off.

If you're paying money to go somewhere and you can only catch 1 salmon, then maybe not. But if you're going with a bunch of buddies, it depends on the situation. Sometimes you go fishing, you're just going to hang out. Even if it was by yourself sometimes.

If you catch one you can still fish, you've just got to put them back right?

Yeah.

I couldn't care if I took it home. It would be nice to have a

*nice fresh fish on my table. But I go more for the sport.
Same here.
I like reeling them in.*

- Q. Is that doable, to catch fish and let them go?
Yeah, if you don't tear them up too badly when you take them off the hook. Try to be careful.
- Q. Are there places to do that?
There are places up over Snoqualmie Pass where its catch and release only. Where they pinch the barb on your hook down so your hook comes out. You can't keep them, but there's the thrill of catching these little fish that are hiding under trees and stuff.
- Q. What kind of fish is that?
*Generally, rainbow trout.
Have you ever been on an open day fishing? Where they just stock these lakes full of rainbow trout and you just stick your pole in. And plop.
Yeah, you get your limit in an hour.
There's a lot of places along 90. Ellensburg in eastern Washington.*
- Q. Who does that?
The state.
- Q. Do they tell you where to go for those?
Yeah. They stock the river sometimes too. I watched them dump trout into the Green River once.
- Q. When you go out fishing are there a lot of people out there?
*More than there used to be. A lot more people living here now.
That's why you're always trying to find another place. When you do anything these days, hiking, camping, in the summertime you see people everywhere.*

- Q. Is that something that would keep you from going fishing?

Uh huh.

Yeah.

- Q. For those of you who've quit fishing, tell me more about why you're not fishing. You seem to enjoy it, you're talking very excitedly about it, but you're not doing it.

It's kind of an intensive thing. It's a very involved sport. You have to have some knowledge about it, you have to have some equipment and some time. There's a lot involved with it. You could have just a pole and a tackle box and walk up to the bank of the stream. It's more fun if you have nice pole, reel, boat, nice fresh bait.

- Q. How expensive is it to have a nice reel, tackle box etc.?

Oh, hundreds of dollars you could spend.

- Q. What do you do in your leisure time?

I don't have any leisure time since I became a mom. That's a good question. I don't work, I'm a stay at home mom, but it just seems the kids take up all my time.

- Q. But the family doesn't fish.

My husband's a city boy, he's from Brooklyn. We just don't get out like what I was used to when I was growing up here as a kid. I was camping all the time. But my husband is not into it. I guess that keeps me from doing it.

- Q. You indicated you're just so-so on the fishing.

I like fishing, I just think it's not convenient.

It's not, you have to make time, you have to plan.

- Q. What do you do in your (free time)?

I go hiking, when I do go out. I will go fishing, occasionally.

If you're out there by yourself, you have to be in the state of mind of concentrating on your fishing. I don't have that

much time to go out and just sit.

Q. Why not?

How come we're not making time to do it? Probably because I have to drive there.

Q. You can't walk there.

Not really.

The quality of fishing is better when you go out farther. You're more alone. You have the privacy and solitude and there's more fish in the higher elevations.

The cleanliness of the fish is questionable.

Q. You do fish, but not an awful lot, or did I misunderstand you?

Yeah, it's information, just not knowing about it, that makes it daunting. If I think about it I guess I could get it in a sporting good store, but I don't even go that far to think about it. Just because not knowing about the information makes it seem like there is a lot to learn about different regulations, like stamps and stuff.

Q. What would it take to get you to go fishing?

If I knew, if it seemed real simple to go to a sporting goods store and get a license and if I could get out of the city on the weekend without sitting in traffic. Traffic is really bad on the weekends here. It's frustrating to leave the city and sit in traffic on a Saturday morning.

Q. What do you do?

Stay inside. Another thing... Some people said there are tons of places to go fishing here and it seems obvious with all the rivers and stuff. But I really don't know of a good place I'd go nearby. There's private property and parks and where do you park?

Q. Do you know how you'd go about getting the information?

I know I could write for a fishing license pretty easy, I

wouldn't know where to get a copy of where to fish in the states.

They have fishing guides.

I don't buy them, my friends do. Get them suckered into buying them and then...

What's the name of it? Eddie Bauer. Right downtown. It's on 5th. They have a big fishing section. They have it specifically for people who want to get into fishing. All the guys that work in there, about 5 guys, they're all hired because they're fishing experts.

- Q. If you met someone to go fishing with, who could tell stories and amuse you in other ways, and if they said, Jeff, give us \$50 and we'll take you out and tell you amusing stories, would you be interested?

Sounds like that's the kind of thing. ...OK, I'm going to give you a good place to go, I'm going to set you up with equipment, I'm going to set you up with a license, I'll rent it to you for a weekend. Not even a weekend, say Tuesday to Thursday, to avoid the traffic. I'd be very happy about that. I'd pay \$50. If I found out there were a lot of people there, I wouldn't go back to that service. But it would definitely tear down a lot of the walls.

I'd go fishing if I knew someone who had a boat, knew where to go, was really good at it, and we caught fish every time we went out. It's definitely helpful to know somebody who's knowledgeable.

- Q. Who are they?

We've got George here.

If you go to fishing tackle stores owned by small business people they'll give you a decent tip, because they want to keep you going. There's North Gate Supply Fishing Shop. If you look in phone book, you'll find the local fishing store. It would certainly do them good to get you hooked back into it.

I think it's probably hard for you in a city. Not as laid back

as in the country. You can't just walk down the road down to the stream. You've got to drive about an hour. My sister lives on a river out in Maple Valley, and to go down to visit her, you see a lot of people standing on the bank fishing, you can always go up and ask them how they're doing, what they're using, what they're fishing for. That's a good way of finding out.

Q. Do you have a boy or girl?

Girl, she's 2.

Q. Would you like her to go fishing?

Oh, sure, but I'm too scared to let her go out on a boat. I'm afraid something is going to happen to her. I want to wait until she's a little older.

Q. Why don't you show your husband how to fish?

Well, he's never shown any interest. He's a Brooklyn boy at heart. He's really a city person. You can take the boy out of the city, as they say.

Or transfer him from one city to another, as the case may be.

Q. Joe, remind me how much you fish in Washington.

Three or 4 times this year, last year a dozen times total. But not very much, because it's been getting busier at work, and personal life.

Q. Is that the main thing?

That's the main thing, and I like to fish up in the islands and that's a couple of hours away, San Juan Islands. About 100 miles from here.

Q. Other than the distance, is it easy to fish there in terms of regulations?

If you have a boat, yeah. I used to have a boat. I was just shore fishing and that put a damper on it too.

- Q. How come you got rid of your boat?
Because I kept throwing money into it.
- Q. Tell me a little bit about the licenses you have to buy, who sells them?
The state, and sporting goods stores. Department of Fishing and Game. Department of Wildlife or something. Fish and Wildlife Department. I just walk up to the booth and pay my money.
- Q. What do they do with the money after you give it to them?
They stock lakes. Some of it goes to stocking. Fund hatcheries. I don't know if they do any restoration. I think a lot of it goes into somebody's pocket. Pay people to patrol. Some of the research activities. Bell and Latsbury County. They do a lot with wardens out there. A guy was out there just the other weekend, he said a warden was out there right when he docked. Checked his boat. Wouldn't take his word for it. It's getting very tight around here as well. The regulations. Commercial fishing around here. Because the salmon are so scarce. These guys aren't making much money, put it that way. If you were living off your fishing, you'd be looking for work. Fisheries. I've also heard some rivers in eastern Washington are being reestablished so salmon can use them. But now it's not possible, because grazing cattle are running into these rivers and ruining them so that salmon can't use them. The Elwar River dam is another good example, a number of electricity producing dams, Yeah they had a big problem of getting rid of the sea lions at the entrance of the locks because they were eating all the salmon as they were coming up. They're back. So many things were used, and they came back.

They take them away and they come back and I guess now they are thinking about killing them.

Q. Why is the salmon going down?

Overfishing in the past. Deforestation. I know this by paying attention to local papers. Friends. Reading the paper all the time.

Q. What's the state doing about it?

Well, part of it is that whole Timber Bill has a bit of that too, of the environmental restoration, trying to negotiate some sort of settlement. Because the fishermen are also involved in that suit. The fishermen of Sound Lake are siding with the environmental crowd rather than the timber people, because all the clear cutting has damaged the salmon.

I hear now they're logging within 50 yards of each shore and leaving little strips of trees... It's not a regular practice but it's been done in a couple of places.

Q. Who regulates that?

The state.

The state is supposed to but there has been a lot of noncompliance that has been let go.

Q. What is the state trying to do?

There seems to be no clear policy enforcement for people in department of forestry and things where they just do not enforce the laws or are slow to do it.

More to do with the timber lobby. I think there might even be some hokey-pokey going on.

It's a matter of a balancing act.

Yeah, it's private land. They're cutting trees from private land and it's going into public pockets.

Q. What does the state do for fishing? If you give your \$14, \$15 or \$16 for your license what are you getting for that?

I really don't see getting much out of it at all.

*You get out of getting a ticket.
You either buy the license up front or you get fined for it.
They take your equipment.*

- Q. What do they do for fishermen? What do you think they do?
*I don't think \$14 is that much money. They probably use it
for keeping the state fishing agency going. It takes a lot
of money to keep that sort of thing going. I'm sure it's the
same thing as hunting.*

I think a large portion goes to hatchery and patrolling.

- Q. What would you like to see the money going to?
*Cleaning up the pollution. The Sound is especially really bad.
You can smell the water before you see it.*

*The hatcheries. They do a pretty good job of keeping the
lakes stocked. It's a lot of effort and somebody's got to
pay for it. The research, to make sure they're all staying
alive.*

*I do some work with streams. Streams have been affected a
lot by development. I know there has been a lot of
research to see how fish react to development. I did a
project and we actually redid a stream. We tried to bring
a stream back to its natural state because it was so bad,
and we tried to get the fish back in there so people can
fish it. I think it's just keeping the streams clean and
fishable.*

- Q. How do they go about doing that?
*Make sure there are not toxins going into the streams,
creating certain habitats within the stream. A lot of times
people cut all the way down to the streams... Keep
development away from the streams. Stream restoration,
repairing around a stream; in order for a stream to live,
it needs its logs falling in and it needs its protection.*

- Q. What would you like to see your money spent on?
Hatcheries, keeping the fish population up. So many of them

are so overfished, on the verge of extinction. Ought to keep them going.

If there are native runs, just see if they can bring them back too. I heard of places where hatchery fish were displacing native fish too. Certainly the wild fish, besides being tougher to catch, taste a lot better.

Q. *Is there anything the state could do to make your fishing trips better?*

It could tell me where the good places are.

Make sure there's not junk in the stream.

A good environment.

Q. *What about more fish?*

Yeah. There is only so much that can be done in a certain area.

That's why they need money so people don't overfish a certain area, and that's why they regulate a certain area. The streams because their population gets low, so they don't want to.

So, basically, the business of selling the ability to fish is kind of self destructive in a way. Only so many people can catch so much fish. Unless of course the population of fish goes up and we just have to throw more back.

If you go another way, you could limit the number of fishermen, charge more money per fisherman. Should the state be doing things like that?

That to me sounds like a really good idea. There can only be so many fish in a certain lake to support that many fish. And there is no limit on how many fishermen can go vie for that number of fish. So, I don't know about charging more money for licenses, then rich people can go fishing.

There's something like rotating permits.

There are places where they have hunting lotteries, where the first 100 people get hunting licenses. And the rest have to wait until next year.

Q. Do they do that here?

On the East Coast. I've never heard of that here. I don't remember getting a license in the East for fishing. They have lotteries for goose or bear. I think that is one reason why people don't do it so much, because they have to go and get a license.

If I go to my parents house I just go out there and fish.

Q. You don't worry about the fish police coming out to check on you?

No, never have. Never been busted.

Must be remote.

No.

I remember after we lived on the Rhode River for a while, if you were fishing off your property, you didn't have to have a license.

That's what we do, we fish right outside the house and we've been doing it for years and I wouldn't say I do it often.

That's like hunting. You don't need a license to hunt on your own land.

Q. What should the state do in terms of the number of the people out there fishing? Should they be getting people out there to go fish?

Their role is to manage.

But they provide information, if there is a sportsman show, you can pick up the information for free from them. A lot of the states have their own representatives for fish and game and they give out maps, and all kinds of stuff. Just go to one fishing show and you're covered for a year.

It's a 2-edge sword, though. Because if they promote it, there is going to be that much more demand on resources and that much more of a challenge to manage it.

Q. Some states do advertise?

It's for tourists. It's not as crowded in Idaho as here.

- Q. Does the state have some obligation to keep you from dropping out of fishing?

No, I think it's more important that there is enough fish for my children and grandchildren. I want my daughter to grow up and know what a salmon looks like. I think that is more important than what a sportsman spends his Saturday mornings doing.

- Q. But if you don't take her fishing, maybe fish are out there, but if people keep dropping out, like you, what difference is it going to make?

I don't think there is much danger of that happening. What difference does it make if people don't go fishing? Then things would go back to the way they were before people moved here. That's not such a terrible thing. We'd have the rivers and streams and the fish the way they've been for a thousand million years.

Fishing seems to be more and more popular now. Fly fishing is a very trendy sport.

It takes one Robert Redford movie.

How about the state. What if you went to the State Fish and Game and said you want to learn how to fly fish. Do they have some role in teaching you how to fly fish.

Commercial businesses take care of that. If you go to a fly fishing store, you've already spent a chunk of money and they are more than willing to get a few more bucks out of you for classes.

- Q. Would it be in the state's interest to teach you how to do it? That's like the open day they had, some states give you 2 days of fishing without a license.

I don't know anything about salmon fishing and I called up the State Fish and Game and asked them how I go about it. Would they tell me, or just tell me like you're doing to go to Eddie Bauer?

I've seen some literature on different fishing. I picked up one last year on squid fishing. Tasty. Yeah, I try not to eat

the ones that are downtown. A lot of people are fishing for squid. There's a little booklet that they put together.

Q. What about videotapes?

I haven't seen any.

Q. Should they be doing that?

I think it's their job to make sure everything stays in the balance it was meant to be in.

Businesses are offering this at fairly reasonable rates.

I'd rather have a brochure. Some really simple brochure from the state. Where I get my fishing license. Maybe they could give people books with their licenses. I'd rather turn to the state than a commercial organization. You were talking about commercial businesses taking you out on boat trips, but if that is all the state can offer, a piece of paper, I think they should have booklets.

Q. So you think they should provide at least a minimum level of information?

Right.

Q. What about teaching me how to fly fish.

No, I don't think that's their place. But a brochure, different brochures for different types of fishing.

The Experimental College teaches you fly fishing for a real cheap amount of money.

Q. What about the state taking people out salmon fishing on boats?

No.

I'll go.

You don't pay them.

But still our tax dollars are paying for it.

I don't think they should be displacing commercial businesses.

I don't think it's their job.

With any sport, if you have any desire to do it, you go get the

information, you have someone teach you, you know someone who does it. The state doesn't inform you of any sport.

It's their job to manage it, and going out there and finding lines tangled everywhere and lakes filled up with glib, it's their job to prevent that sort of thing, not encourage it. They could certainly put out literature out on it.

Q. *Who should do it?*

People in commercial positions, businesses, colleges.

I don't think it's in the interest of the commercial businesses to say I don't think you should be fishing this aggressively or in this type of way. I think the state should say we should cut back, maybe we should take a more active role because things are coming out of balance.

What I mean by commercial is commercial businesses.

Using them as an information clearinghouse would be helpful.

So if you went to a lake you hadn't been there before, so if you went to a local bait shop the pamphlets would be there and you could buy them for a quarter, when is the best time to fish. They could have it marked out where the best place to fish and tips from local fishermen.

I think they could have the information, but I don't think it is up to the state to provide it.

The local bar does a good job too.

If it is taking away from the state's true concentration - protecting the environment and managing them. If it's making money it wouldn't be taking away from this concentration. A lake has to be stocked, why does it have to be stocked? Is it because it is so polluted? If the natural fish population is dying, it has to go to prevent that. And if it has to be stopped because there are so many people taking fish out, pay for stocking fish and that's OK, and pay for keeping limits down. But everybody should have the right to go get something and eat it.

I think vanity plates on your car go for funding some of that,

goes to the wildlife. Not just fishing, but hunting also.

- Q.** Your general impression is that there are more fishermen?
Yes. Everybody is competing for resources. Commercial fishermen and sport fishermen.

You're in, you're out.

Not just here but if you follow it from Alaska down, commercial fishermen are not happy.

I don't think we know the rate by which we should touch them.

That's why the research should be done.

- Q.** Pass those (note) pads around, just right down 1 or 2 words, The most important thing about fishing. I'm still confused. Because when I ask you straight out, you don't talk about fish. But when I push you to fish, the actual fish itself becomes important.

First thing I put is getting out in fresh air, second family and third improving on my fishing skills. That would be important to me if I frequently fished again. You know, what to put on the end of that line to get whatever fish you want. The more fishing I used to do the more skilled I got at it.

I wrote down that I want to be able to have a really good time, so years from now I have a fishing story.

Enjoyment of catching fish with friends and dining on the fish you caught. I like it when you go out there and it's really quiet and just enjoy the serenity of nature, if you go hiking or fishing, that type of environment. I don't like that sport fishing.

At the end of the day of fishing, ideally I would have liked to have caught a fish or 2. Get out there in the clean air with a buddy or 2 and just babble about anything. Sit there and talk or think, if you've got some problems. Time to think about it without interruption. And of course a little exercise, running around on the rocks or crossing logs over streams. If you do it regularly you can see your skills improve.

Having fish for a meal. Having clean fish and lots of fish, not overfished. I've been fishing with garbage on the ground and garbage floating by. It's horrible.

Seems to me like a package of different things. Good edible fish, the thrill of catching it, nice weather, nice clean location without too many people around. Relatively easy access to get there, or knowledge of where to go. All those things together. I think the Fish and Game Department should make information pretty accessible of where to go and what resources are there. Not necessarily to promote it.

The rewarding, satisfying feeling. Aesthetic experience of going out into a clean environment, rhythm of nature, that kind of thing, not really surrounding the catching and excitement. I'm sure maybe I could get caught up in that again, but right now, no.

The thrill of catching the fish, the struggling but also I want to know where and how, what's the best way, something to make it easier for me.

- Q. *Would you go to a place that were bad if you knew you were going to catch lots of fish?*

No, because I'd much rather go to someplace where there is a lot less chance of catching a fish but at least the fish are clean.

- Q. *What would be the most important thing about fishing to get you to start fishing regularly?*

Knowing where to go. Having fresh fish to eat, and you can't buy them that fresh at QFC. A good fresh fish dinner would be a good incentive. If I came to a place with not many people and the sun shining and it's quiet and I see a bald eagle or a deer or 2, then I think I'd have a good day.

So being able to go out anywhere around here and try and fill up my freezer when I get home. So, going camping for a week and being able to feed yourself. Not to be over-taxed

or over-regulated. If there is a shortage, it's because of logging spoiling the rivers and the dams. Individual fishermen because they're easy to control, because we don't have lobbies to back us up. If a place is being overfished, then it's fine to go in and do something about it. But if it is something like salmon where people are doing it for profit and they're taking more fish than they need for the money and we have to buy licenses and stamps to support that effort, that is unfair.

It would be nice if there were a place to go get information and tips.

Q. Thank you all for coming this evening. Do you have any questions?

Is the state Fishing Department thinking of funding some education?

I think it is the job of our governments to keep people from overrunning our natural resources, not to promote it.

I think the state should supply information on where, have signs to say if there is fish there and whether or not it's live bait. And the state should be researching for sure.

Researchers' Analysis

This group was composed of active and inactive anglers. All were urban residents and angling activity ranged from none to several years, fishing monthly or on a regular basis. The group seemed to be fairly well informed about environmental issues including some issues concerning fish management and fishing.

Family Issues/Socialization

All of this group were either involved in fishing around issues of the family or had originally fished with their families. This seemed to be of major importance to nearly all of the group. One woman reported a high degree of fishing while growing up but none currently. She indicated that while she would like to go fishing, it was no longer a part of her family activities and therefore she chose not to fish by herself.

I fished a lot with my dad when I was growing up and now I fish when I see my dad.

I fished all over with my dad, like most people.

I go because my friends go. It's not a serious endeavor, just for fun, not a true hobby.

Just being out in the fresh air. My sister and I went with my dad, we went all over.

I go because my dad goes.

My husband's a city boy. We just don't get out.

I like fishing, but it's just not convenient.

If you're out there alone, you have to concentrate on just fishing, I just don't seem to have the time.

I like the idea of having a story to tell years from now.

Utilitarian/Food/Catching Fish

Despite the relatively low level of fishing activity, this group seemed to place high value on catching fish. They agreed that they placed higher value on issues other than catching fish, but felt that catching fish was important. This group showed no indication that the number of fish caught or the size of the fish was an

especially important factor in their angling activity although several members of the group mentioned "catching the big one" and one member talked about catching a 300-pound black marlin in Central America.

I'm looking for something to eat. I'm not a purist, catch and release, stuff like that.

Having good fish to eat is important.

I love to catch them because I love to eat them, but if I don't, that's o.k. too, just flogging the water.

Catching is the best part, that's the thrill.

It's a good source of food, eat everything you catch, that's what I do.

For me it's the thrill of catching a fish, catching the big one.

Improving my fishing skills would be important. Just knowing that it would get easier. The more fishing I used to do, the more I knew about it.

At the end of the day I'd like a fish or 2, but it's important to get exercise and talk, just little bits of fun to keep it interesting.

Naturalistic/Outdoors Experiences

This group showed the most satisfactions with fishing as an outdoors experience. They were the most enthusiastic about experiences which involved solitude and being in a good location. The quality of the environment was especially important to them. When pressed on the issue of catching fish versus a place to fish, all of the group agreed that fishing in a quality environment was more important.

The relaxation, fresh air.

The last time I went I really didn't want to catch anything. I cast 6 times and caught 4 fish and it turned into a pain. I was getting a little bummed out, it was turning into effort at that point.

You need to get out in the woods. The quality of the fish in the city isn't that good. (Fish) get better at higher elevations.

Catching fish is important, but I'd only want to do it in a

clean place.

There's a whole list of things, but getting out in nature in a nice place is probably the most important.

Regulations

This group did not feel that regulations were especially restrictive or complicated, but did feel that the reasons for some regulations were obscure. Most of the group felt that an understanding of the regulations was important and something they needed to have information about.

There's a 2-fish limit on salmon.

If I went (fishing), I wouldn't know the rules. I wouldn't know if I could keep one. There is an unspoken rule to fishing, there are so many secrets. I'd have to spend 6 months learning my rules, that seems like too much work for me. I'd go if I could be sure that I knew all the rules, the secrets, if I could catch something, and that seems like quite a lot.

There are a lot of places you can't use live bait, you have to know that stuff.

The main thing that keeps me from fishing is knowing the rules, that and someone to fish with.

It seems like there is a lot to learn about the regulations, the stamps and stuff. If I could just go to a sporting goods store and get a license and get out of the city.

Agency Awareness/Image

Overall, the image of the state agency was quite neutral. There was some general negative views, but this was probably more related to general issues of distrust rather than specific issues with the state agency. This group had very low levels of involvement with the state agency. They had the general impression that more than one agency was responsible for fish management and that most of the effort went into hatcheries and "fish police" patrols. They had a general impression that the agency did not do much in the way of environmental protection, but generally agreed that environmental protection was something they "ought" to do.

However, the group did not have an especially negative view of the agency, except as it related to government in general.

They stock lakes. Pay people to patrol. Some research activities.

They have a lot of wardens out there.

There's that Timber Bill, that's a lot of environmentalism there. I hear the fishermen are siding with the environmentalists. It sounds like there's been a lot of non-compliance there and (the agency) just lets them go.

I don't see that I'm getting anything out of (my license fee).

I want to know how and where. Knowing where to go is the most important thing.

They use (the money) to keep the agency going, it takes a lot of money. The (license) money goes for that.

(The agency) should clean up the pollution to clean up the sound.

They need to keep development away from streams. It takes a lot to keep a stream going.

I've heard where hatchery fish are displacing native fish. If there is anything they can do to preserve native fish. Native fish taste better too.

They should tell me where the good places are.

They should protect the environment. Fish will come if there is a good environment.

There can only be so many fish per lake and if there's no limit on the number of people who can go fish, they need to have permits like they do for hunting.

Their role's to manage. Giving out maps. They go to fishing shows. It's a 2-edged sword.

It's important for them to make sure there are fish in the future. I want my daughter to know what a salmon looks like.

They have information. I picked up a pamphlet on squidding last year. It's a little booklet they've put together.

I don't think it's their job to say how to fish, it's their job to keep things in balance.

Is the state doing fish management or angler management? I

think it has to be a little bit of both. The state needs to make sure there is a balance.

Giving information or making money is o.k. unless it's taking away from their true duties.

Service from the agency is important.

If they have to regulate individuals that's o.k., but if it's for profit then I think it's not right. Sometimes the big guys making money are (not) paying their share.

I think it is the role of government to keep people from over-running the environment, not promoting it.

Costs

Costs associated with fishing, especially license costs, did not seem to be a major factor with this group. They expressed some general concerns with costs, but this is probably not a factor in fishing activity.

The whole excursion is expensive, but it works out o.k.

If someone gave me a rod and reel and said 'let's go', I'd go.

I'd weigh it out, (the cost of the license) might dissuade me.

The main thing is (having someone to fish with).

Not to be overtaxed or regulated is important.

Access/Opportunity

This group did not feel that fishing access was a problem in Washington. In fact, they seemed to feel that there was adequate access in most areas.

In western Washington you can't step in a place without finding fishing.

I know it seems obvious, but I don't really know where to go.

There's private property and all that and I don't know how to go about finding out.

In the city things aren't so laid back. In the country you can always find a place to go fishing.

Site III • Tampa, Florida
January 20, 1994

Transcription: Active Anglers

Demographic Characteristics

white male moderator

1 African-American female, 2 white females

6 white males

- Q. Tell me a little about yourself and about your fishing experience here in Florida.

I am a dying breed, a native Floridian, from Tallahassee.

I've been fishing in Tallahassee as long as I can remember, primarily freshwater fishing initially, until I got down here and tried to combine both and gave up just about. I still do just a little bit of fishing, but primarily saltwater. If I'm not fishing and do not have to work, I'm out hunting. Work gets in the way. I work at the sheriff's office.

I grew up here too, in Tampa. I started fishing, I guess when I was in my early teenage years. I'm 33 now. I fish mainly in freshwater and some saltwater, then it grew into the saltwater. I like that a lot better, more variety, more year round. I do a lot of flat shallow fishing, not a whole lot of deep water. But, if I do, I try to go with somebody who knows it. Flats, shallow water; down here flats is fishing. We're talking a lot of shallow water, like under 5 feet. A lot of times in the boat there are a lot of places

you can reach to wade. I do a lot of that and the flats fishing is generally about 3 or 4 fish we go after. There are trout, redfish and snook. Once in a while I run into things like cobia. Most of what I go after are trout, snook and redfish. Those seem to be the popular sought after game fish down here.

I was born and raised in Tampa and I've been fishing my whole life. I think I'm beginning to see why I don't catch that many fish. I go flat fishing all the time too. We put a lot of pressure I guess on the fish, but I fish freshwater and saltwater, mostly flats and in saltwater. The freshwater fishing I do now is just to take my kids, because it's (freshwater) easier to go, it's quicker, easier to find places, and easier to make an enjoyment out of it, but there are not very many fish left in freshwater so I don't do a heck of a lot of it anymore.

I've lived here since I was 3. I'm not a native, but pretty damn close. I do mostly saltwater fishing, but unfortunately I do not own a boat. I wish I did but I'm limited to the piers. I go to Ft. DeSoto which is southern St. Petersburg, the old Skyway Bridge down in that area. If I get a chance to go fishing it's probably my primary enjoyment out of life, but unfortunately like I said I don't have a boat and can't get out there on some of these flats other than wading like you said. I guess I'm getting too old and chill in the water. I just have always enjoyed fishing, always have and probably always will.

I've lived here 42 years and grew up and went to Clearwater Beach when it was beautiful. My dad took us there and I started fishing as a kid. I had a Boston Whaler for a while and did a lot of freshwater fishing at the Sunshine Skyway and surrounding areas. I graduated, got married and had 3 daughters and lost my boat. The next door neighbor took me freshwater fishing when I was about 23 or 24 and we've been friends ever since. We go fishing to Kissimmee and surrounding areas. I still enjoy it, and have been thinking about getting back into saltwater a

little bit. I love freshwater. I mainly do freshwater fishing with my friend. We fish for large-mouth bass.

I'm a native. I started fishing probably when I was about 3 or 4 going fishing with my grandparents. We did more playing than we did more fishing. Now I sort of combine fishing with crabbing. That's a lot of fun. You throw a line out for the fish and sort of forget about it and you spend the rest of your time trying to catch blue crabs either with a line or a trap. It's a lot of fun. I take a couple of girlfriends after work and have a lot of fun.

I was born in St. Joseph's Hospital in Tampa, Florida. I grew up on Lake Magdalene on the west side and now own a house on the east side of Lake Magdalene. I had a commercial fishing license for saltwater since 1969. I've guided on Lake Kissimmee in the '60 and '70s, not professionally. I did not get paid, I would do it for work, etc. I fish for everything... grouper, amberjack, snapper (mostly what we sell). I guided for bass, speckled perch (which is bad up north), speckled perch if you are a Native Floridian. I fish mostly in rivers and lakes. I do lots of saltwater fishing too. I have a 25' 10-inch Pro Line, but the boat's not for commercial fishing. I still hold my (commercial) license and it's quite expensive but I do it for pleasure now. I worked for the Post Office by the way as the Data Systems Officer there and started working there in '66 and I did this on the side because I love to fish. I found out after a couple of years, in '69, '70 or '71, that fishing becomes work. In '69 we went in debt (my cousin and I) and we bought a boat. It cost us about \$15,000 which was a lot of money at that time, and we paid for it in 2-1/2 years fishing. That would be like buying a \$45,000 boat now. Then it became an obligation that you had to go out this weekend to catch that 1,000 Lbs. of fish to pay for that boat and it just became work and got to where I didn't want to do it anymore. After we had the boat paid for we sold it and then just pleasure-fished from then on. I still have my commercial license because it's

hard to get one if you don't have one, so I renew it. I have not fished commercially in essence since 1971.

I'm a housewife and have 5 children. We started fishing with the kids, but I fished when I was a lot younger. I'm originally from Ohio. I came here when I was 9 and I've been fishing here since I was 9 years old. We do fresh and salt and I do better in fresh. I always catch the garbage fish when I'm out in salt. But, we have a small v-bottom we go out in now. We have one child at home, so now we can go out by ourselves. The kids go with us and go camping and fishing and they thoroughly enjoy it. They are bringing up the next group of fishermen.

I'm not from here. I'm from North Carolina and I've been fishing since I was about 4 or 5. When I'm not fishing, I'm working on cars. I do mostly fresh, but I get dragged to salt. I like mostly fresh because you could sit there and worm. You have fun worming. Other times, I don't know, you get too many catfish when you go saltwater fishing. Every now and then I get something good, but I always end up with catfish.

Q. You have all been fishing for a long time. Apparently most of you have been fishing since you were children.

My parents got me into it since I was younger.

I have 9 brothers and sisters and if one of them wasn't going, the other one was. We got to tag along. It started out pretty much like playing and eventually got into just enjoying the fishing. To me, once I was hooked, it just continued and never has changed.

Q. Did any of you fish before that?

Oh yes, but the switch to freshwater, my friend had 3 kids (it was his only relaxation) he had a canoe and off we went.

Q. Who do you go fishing with now?

Guys from the office. We do primarily saltwater. We wind up going about 20-25 miles out.

Q. So do you go with other guys or in a group?

I have almost given up freshwater.

Q. What about your family?

Yes, my son has since left home. Teenagers suddenly get other interests. My oldest is starting to come back to fishing. He loves fishing, but probably more than I do. The other teenager, he has other things to get to.

Q. Pam, when your kids were growing up did they go fishing?

My kids have always been fishing. The first time my youngest went camping, he was 12-days old. We went camping and fishing then with my parents. All my kids have been brought up camping, fishing. They now are taking friends camping and fishing. They borrow your equipment. It has always been a good outlet for kids. I'd rather have them out doing something like that than on the street getting into trouble. My husband and I even took our youngest son 2 years ago to Alaska fishing and we went salmon fishing and trout fishing and he thoroughly enjoyed it, and had a ball. He didn't catch a great big one, but he had a good time.

Q. How often do you folks go fishing?

Any chance we can get.

I went Sunday.

I try to go every couple of weeks.

I go mostly in the summer time when the weather gets warmer.

I go every day.

I go after work when it's daylight longer.

Q. How many times would you say you go?

I would say about 4 times a month.

I try to go every week after work.

Since last year, I've probably caught 10 or 12 fish.

You get away from everybody running in and out of the house and for peace and quiet. My husband tells me I'm the best

fishing partner he has because I sit in the boat and I fish all day.

- Q. If you could go to the library for peace and quiet, why are you going fishing?

Enjoyment.

Two reasons. One, many times when I get off of work and it's warm, I just put on a pair of cut-offs, I take my fly rod, walk down to the lake and wade out to my waist, and try and catch some fish. That's relaxation. The other thing is, when I'm serious about it, it's the challenge. It's just like Gary said, he likes to hunt. At this time of the year I'm doing a lot of hunting also. It's just the challenge of your knowledge against the wit of that fish or that animal.

- Q. What do you get out of fishing? What's the main thing when you're going fishing that you are looking for.

I'm a real estate agent. It's pretty busy. I'm around buildings, houses, everything else. I'm around people. I get out there and try to get to the most secluded spot. Just get out there and the trees. I go out with friends a lot of times if I can.

- Q. Do you have family?

No, I'm not married. But, I will go with some friends from work, guys that like to fish. I like to go with someone that likes to fish all day.

- Q. So when you start out and you know you will be fishing all day, and at the end of the day you get one thing that you wanted to have that day, what is it that you wanted at the end of that day that you didn't have to start with?

That I went out. Because a lot of fish I release.

- Q. Do you release the fish that you catch, and not keep it?

Most all of them.

I'll give you an example. For me, it's many, many things.

But the things I do remember are memories of being in certain places. You go down to the tributaries, it takes about 45 minutes with an outboard or whatever. By the time you meander down there (the best time to go down there is April or May and it's not too hot) you will see some of the most beautiful birds, more alligators than you have seen in your life. Just some of the most pristine Florida land you have ever wanted to see. In fact they advertise that it's like when the Spanish first discovered it. So you are there, and if you ever saw a hawk take a fish out of the water, or a deer walk right into the water and drink while you're fishing, it's absolutely gorgeous. Busch Gardens can't even come close to that. One time Ron and I hooked into 23 bass and we took about 8 back. We cooked up bass with macaroni and cheese. I still haven't forgotten that day. That's a memory for me, and that's why you go back at it again and again.

I go fishing for the good times and the company. I have a couple of days, I go fishing with my kids at times, or the people I work with. It's nice if you catch fish, but I always have a good time even if I don't. I tend to like my trips to be only about 4 hours long than all day, unless you get into them and they don't stop biting, then nobody leaves. We stay as long as we can, but I like to get away for short periods of time like that.

Q. Now, down here you folks catch a lot of different kinds of fish. How important is that as to the type of fish. How important is what you are catching?

To me it's really not important. I enjoy going to fish to fish. I have sat in the boat all day and caught nothing and have enjoyed it just as much as when I have caught a bunch of garbage fish or had some and lost them. I enjoy going out and sitting in a boat with my husband and fishing and being with him all day because that is our quiet time together.

If I catch one, I'm happy. I don't care. I go to Dunedin, I sit

on the side underneath the bridge. I'll sit on the side, and I'll catch pinfish all day and I'm happy. We're catching fish.

- Q. The type of fish that you catch. Does that make any difference? Are you picking a place, how do you choose a place to go fishing?

Some nights I go out to the causeway and stay out there all night and in the morning I go to the lake. It's like a variety, I go salt, fresh, fresh, salt. It doesn't matter. If I catch something fine, if not, that's all right.

- Q. What's the reason you pick a place to go fishing like that?

Just a different variety, instead of going to the lake every single day and just catching a bass, or just catching channel cats or freshwater cats or something. You can go salt, and get a sail cat or trout or something, you know, it's different.

I think it's just different scenery. You know, the girls I go with ask, "Where do you want to go, let me know by lunch time". Sometimes we'll ride out 41 and stop at a place on 41, sometimes we'll go out on Davis Island.

- Q. Why do you pick that spot? What is it about that place?

New expectations.

I don't know because sometimes we'll get there and one is way down there and the other one is way down there. We may not even talk to each other for a half hour or so. We just stand up there staring or thinking, or remembering different things. It's relaxing. We call it bonding.

- Q. You fish mainly with your friends. How about you? Your family?

My grandmother is too old, my grandfather is gone. Just with my friends.

I can remember one time going fishing with one of my buddies and we didn't catch anything but catfish all night long. This was saltwater fishing, but it was one of the best times

I have ever had fishing. We were rigged up catching 2 at a time, and it was just nothing but fun because as soon as we were putting our bait out there... (now I've had many a times when we've been out there 3 or 4 hours and did not get a bite). To me it's the fun of bringing something in because I don't take home a lot of the fish I catch. I love to get out and get a mess of speckled trout or something like that. To me it's the fun of bringing in the fish. Nine times out of 10 I turn them loose. That time I was out with my buddy night fishing, we just had a few drinks and were just enjoying each other's company sitting out there, and left and right one after the other. It was continuous catching fish and it was probably the best time I have ever had.

Q. Why do you folks call catfish "trash fish?"

We'll these are saltwater fish. They slime your line. They take your bait, you can't eat them, ruin your line and they are hard to get off the hook. They catch themselves.

Q. You talk about being out there and doing nothing but catching catfish, and you still enjoy it. Would you keep going fishing if you had more than a reasonable expectation that that's all you're going to catch?

I read the newspaper too. I go down to Ft. DeSoto if mackerel are hitting. Mackerel is a good fish as far as I'm concerned. If I could get out and get a mess of mackerel with a spoon, we rig up little gold hooks, try green batch or whatever. When we get into the mackerel it's pretty much the same experience but then you're bringing up a fish that's good to take home.

Q. How did you find out about that?

Read the newspaper, see what's going, what's running here or there. It's not always that I can get out there when the newspaper says that they're going. If I have the time and I can get out to some place the newspaper states they are

hitting, I'll go give it a try.

- Q. Do the rest of you check the newspaper? Carolyn do you look for information about it?

No, we just get together at work and say don't you think it's time we go fishing? If I go to Davis Island I check the tides to make sure what the tide is so you don't have to throw it half way across the channel.

I usually check, but I go any way.

That's the only time we have to go, after work.

- Q. All of you sound pretty busy. Gary, in your life you are a police officer, you have kids to raise. How important is fishing in your life? What part does it play in your overall lifestyle?

It's important. Probably more so in the summer. Right now we've been going out at Tarpon Springs and we're going about 23 miles out to get to decent water for grouper. It's enjoyable taking the boat out, with the other guys and their boat, and just sitting out there where you can just see water and no land. We usually do pretty well as far as fish, but it doesn't matter if we don't bring that much back. It's getting more expensive every time, gas naturally, with the boat running out that far. It burns about 60-70 gallons of gas... you stop at a gas pump and put \$60-\$70 worth of gas in your boat, not your car. That's why it's good to have a friend with you, because with your wife it's still coming out of your pocket, and that doesn't work.

- Q. On that kind of fishing, how much does it cost to equip yourself? How much do you add up in equipment?

I probably don't. If you did, you would get totally sick and you might quit. I have a 22 Mako fully outfitted with all the electronics and stuff that you have to have to do that kind of fishing, at least I do. I want to get back when I get out there. When it gets rough out there, I come back

in.

I don't care about how much money you're spending necessarily.

Q. In terms of your lifestyle, how important is your fishing to your life?

Well, as the new year comes in, I always try to re-schedule myself. I can pretty well dictate things. Last year was a very good year for my business so I didn't do as much fishing as I normally do. I usually take off a full day once a week, on Thursday. Near the end of the year I was just working, working, working. This year I hired someone to work for me so I can get out there more. I hired an assistant to help me.

Q. Did you think about fishing when you did that?

That was part of my decision, yes. I want days off.

Q. And you thought, because you wanted to go fishing?

Yes. That was part of it.

Q. That was a pretty major decision in lifestyle.

I wanted my Thursdays back.

Q. Well, if you counted that as part of your fishing cost...

Like you said, you can't add it up, it doesn't make sense.

Q. I'm just trying to get a feel for how important your overall...

I guess I really didn't realize how important it was. I watch fishing on TV on Saturdays. I spend a lot of time looking at tackle in stores whether I'm buying it or not and I'm buying tackle I don't need. I buy reels and rods I don't need. I guess I've bought 2 since the year started and I'm looking at the third one in the catalog.

According to my husband, one might be better than the other one, so you have to get the other one.

I don't play as much golf as I used to. I'm not a regular with

golfing. The last several years I've been pretty regular with fishing.

Q. How is the fishing in Florida?

It's not as good as it was 5 years ago. Let's take bag limits for example. In the late 50's, 60's, you had no problem getting your limit wherever you went. Now the bag limits have been reduced, and you have a hard time really meeting that reduced limit.

Q. The numbers of fish. How about kinds of fish?

Kinds of fish, the same.

Q. You are still catching the same kind of fish?

The same fish.

You change the sizes, the keepers. You have to have a certain size to keep it. They changed that.

Q. On everything?

Mostly the game fish. It used to be there weren't many saltwater limits on fishing at all. Now, that is the most heavily pressured area. Freshwater has been regulated for a long time.

The only one I could remember is that snook had to be 18 inches in the 60's. Now they changed that, they have the cobia, the redfish.

Forget about fishing for snapper. They have so many size limits you can't even keep track of them.

You have to carry a computer with you to figure out what you can keep.

Q. Tell me, how is fishing today comparing to how it used to be when you were growing up?

When I was fishing I remember distinctly the fun going after mullet. I can still see very vividly along the Howard Franklin side schools of mullet. I called it snatch hooking, you use a spinning reel. It was just fun. I don't see them

anymore. To me that was an indicator of them going. I've been bass fishing for 20 years. Bass fishing to me, you can't estimate too well. Maybe some other people can, I can't. Sometimes it seems that you hit it lucky, sometimes you may get one.

- Q. Tell me, somebody said it is better than it was 5 years ago? Explain that to me, what do you mean by that?

They have cleaned up some of the pollution. Tampa Bay for a while got to be terrible, but it's finally coming back around and getting a little more action.

- Q. How do you judge that? How do you know?

More fish. They are putting artificial reefs out, sinking old barges, grass flats.

We used to have beautiful grass on the bottom which supported the shrimp and the small fish that the bigger fish would come in and eat. Because of pollution, all that grass died. Now, they have replanted the grass and cut down on the pollution. The shrimp are coming back, the small and bigger fish are coming back. It's a chain. The bag limits and size limits have helped considerably also.

They've stopped the shrimpers from dragging nets. It killed all the small fish you might catch.

- A. That's not allowed anymore?

Not in certain areas.

The problem is most counties are restricting themselves. It's not being done throughout the state. Certain counties have laws to restrict that.

- Q. I'm going to return to this in one minute. First, let me pose a hypothetical question. Jennifer, let's suppose you're telling me that you are going fishing every single day. What would I have to do to get you to stop fishing, what would you take? You can't.

- A. Can you think of a substitute that you would accept for fishing?

Can't think of any.

- Q. Can you relate, obviously I can't offer you money or something like that, but the reason I'm asking that is that there are a lot of people who don't fish.

I have another sports interest. I also bowl. I would not give up fishing just for bowling.

- Q. Well, what's different between you and these people that don't fish?

My wife, for example, whenever I get ready to go fishing, occasionally she goes with me. She's the kind of person that when she gets out there she has a good time. Me trying to motivate her to get her to go fishing with me is like pulling her teeth because she doesn't want to go out there and get the stuff ready and get our rods and reels and put everything in the truck. She doesn't want to ride out there. If I lived on a lake, or something like that, she might enjoy fishing more. I would say proximity to where I'm going fishing because I usually spend 1 hour getting ready to go where I'm going fishing because I don't have a boat or live on a lake. I usually go saltwater 1 to 1-1/2 hours. When I leave the house, by the time I have my bait and go fishing, it's a good hour to an hour and a half.

I think a lot of times people are not oriented into this kind of sport. They don't get into it as they are older. I had 2 sisters and no brothers and my father loved to fish. We were at the reservoir or at the different lakes and ponds fishing and we were treated just like the boys. We went out fishing, played ball and did everything just like the boys did, and camped, and I liked it and all my kids like it. And now, my son for Christmas, I bought him a tent. My grandson got a sleeping bag, and they are going to start camping and fishing. I think it's more or less passed on to the generations because I have friends who hate to

fish and they go camping but they don't fish because they never did. They don't like to touch the bait, you know when you talk fishing worms or a shrimp.

Q. Carolyn do you go out with your friends?

Yes.

Q. Is there anything you could do with your girlfriends other than fishing that would give you the satisfaction?

That's about the only time we get together socially when we go out.

Q. But you wouldn't get together for dancing or...?

That's all my friends and I like to do. If we ask other people to go, they look at us funny.

I guess you have to be the kind of person that enjoys fishing. I guess you are right about being brought up in it. When you are a small child and you are taught to fish, you don't even think about it being dirty. It's part of your learning. At the same time, my little brother hates to fish. He was brought up just like I was. He went as many times as I did when we were little.

Q. But yet, is he into other sports?

We're pretty close. We play golf together a lot and do a lot of other things together. When it comes time to go fishing, he'll go but he doesn't like it.

Some people excel in certain areas. My one daughter, she fishes, but God forbid if she gets away from a mall. We'll go out fishing and she asks how long we are going to be there. She'll go out and she will enjoy it, but when we say we're going she'll say "I'm going to stop at the mall on the way home," and the rest of kids could stay for hours. She still likes to go but not for long periods of time.

Q. Well, you are all talking about this great stuff. What don't you like?

It's hot out there sometimes. I almost passed out one time. Out on that Skyway, I was out there all day long, there was not a cloud in the sky and it was probably 97-98°, I shouldn't have been out there to tell you the truth. I just picked a bad day to go because it was too hot. I can stand the cold easier than I can stand the hot. When it gets really hot like that I can't stand it. I've been out in the cold... I threw a rod out right off the sea wall before because I had so many coats keeping me warm, I just would cast.

On bad weather days, there's not much you can do other than go home.

Inconsiderate boaters... people on lakes are very inconsiderate of other people and fishermen especially. If you have a light out, they don't watch what they're doing, they come sailing up and they'll cut your lines and cut in too close. If you are out there for peace and quiet, you don't want someone with a beer in their hand running around you.

- Q. Jennifer, does that bother you? Have you had problems with that when you go fishing, with boaters?

Yes. My dad had his own boat and I took my dad's boat out. I was sitting there fishing, enjoying myself. This guy was trolling by, and he stopped right beside me. There was no room for me to cast. He would cast right over my line. He would roll my line in, his line, my lure, and I'm like...

- Q. Is this a function of an individual, or is it crowded where you go fishing?

It's not crowded, I think they like the company, they want to see how you're doing. If they see a lot of people in one area, they want to see what they're catching.

- Q. Gary, you do some pretty serious fishing out in the ocean. What's a bad day?

A bad day is when the seas are supposed to be 2-3 feet and you get out there and they turn out to be 5-6 feet, and you

get back and the gas tank is empty and you don't have anything to show for it and your butt is just beat to death and then you get back in and you wonder why you're doing this. This is enjoyment? But, you wind up thinking that by next weekend you go back and everyone is saying they're hitting. People are catching grouper, so here we go again. You are going to have some of those bad days and you get frustrated.

- Q. Obviously you've gone out in the ocean. What about other places? Is it hard, harder, how hard is to find places to go fishing?

I would say there are places to go u'll over.

We try to find new spots. We've picked places before where we've walked 30 minutes carrying our bait and rods and reels and everything because we just know there are going to be a ton of fish at this point. Sometimes we'll get into something, sometimes we fish all night and not get anything. It's adventure.

- Q. But you don't have a tough time finding a place to go fishing? No, not down here, not if you've lived here a while.

- Q. If I just moved down here would I have a hard time finding a place to go fishing? How would I find out about places to go? You don't have to move down here.

Bait shops, Sports Unlimited, any of those places.

There are a lot of things published about where to go.

Florida has a fishing book that shows all the lakes, the ramps that you can pay. I think it cost \$5 when it first started coming out. At first you could get it from the Game Commission. Back when I bought it a few years ago I bought it from Sports Unlimited. It tells you what size motor you can have on different lakes, where the ramps are.

It's very specific, it tells you what type of equipment is allowed, what isn't allowed.

- Q. Let's say I have all my equipment. I have my own equipment, I don't have to worry about that. What's it going to cost me to go fishing. What expenses do I have to look at?
Freshwater or saltwater fishing?
- Q. I don't know, like you folks, most of you are doing both. You can gravitate back and forth. Let's assume I'm just like you, in that I want to try a little of both before I settle down. Well, what type of fishing do you like to do?
- Q. Well, you tell me.
Well, if you just want to go fishing for the fun of going fishing and catching fish, the best thing you can do in Florida is just go right over here to the coast and go out on a party boat and for \$35 and 8 hours you can go out and probably catch yourself 20-30 fish.
- Q. That's all it's going to cost me is \$35? Let's say I wanted to go out on my own, what would I have to pay for a license?
\$15.50. You get a saltwater fishing license.
- Q. Say I wanted to go bass fishing at night. How much is it going to cost me to go if I wanted to do saltwater and freshwater?
Your freshwater is \$13.50. It depends, because a lot of times if you are out on a boat you have to have a license. If you are not on a boat you don't have to have a license. If you are on a charter boat you don't have to have a license.
- Q. So I have to buy a freshwater and saltwater license?
You don't have to unless you want to do just saltwater or just freshwater.
- Q. Where do you buy this license?
K-Mart, Walmart. It's different for non-residents.
- Q. So I have to buy a freshwater license and a saltwater license

unless I'm going out on a charter boat and I don't need a license.

You don't need a license if you're fishing from shore.

- Q. How hard is it going to be for me to find this license?

Go to K-Mart, Walmart, everywhere.

- Q. I'm buying it at the store, but who is actually selling the license?

The State of Florida. They charge 50c for selling it.

- Q. Where does that money go?

The \$13.50 goes back to the State of Florida, the 50c goes to the seller. The breakdown is supposed to be for wildlife and game management and game and fish and it's supposed to help re-evaluate and re-generate the fishing population.

It pays for the salaries of the game wardens and also to replenish the land, the game, the habitat, etc.

- Q. Why 2 licenses?

Saltwater is just recent. It hasn't been for 35 years. It's only been a few years.

It was tremendously resisted here in Florida. The state has just grown so much. You need the revenue because of Marine Fisheries and Marines Patrol are separate from your inland waters and Game Commission Patrols. They are 2 separate entities.

- Q. Explain that to me.

Well, saltwater is Florida Marine Patrol and the fisheries for that are separate than the Florida Game and Fish Commission which is freshwater. It involves 2 state agencies, different waters.

- Q. Tell me, it's \$13.50 for the freshwater and how much for saltwater?

\$15.50, which is too much. Even if you want to keep on fishing, the sportsmen want it basically. They say they are trying to combine the 2. It's the sportsmen, the fishermen who want it combined. It is the commercial fishermen that are fighting not to get it done because they know with this combined, the Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission takes over the saltwater also, they will reduce their size limit so they can take their poundage. So, it's the sportsmen who are paying for that license. They really want to preserve the future of their sport.

- Q.** Carolyn, you look like maybe you are a little dubious about that.

I don't get into all that. I didn't know the...

I think it's a reasonable price.

No, I don't have any problems. I don't like shelling out the money. Once it's gone, it's gone.

The sportsmen buy the license and know what it's going for. As long as they don't go and start making a stamp for brim, bass, etc. it will be o.k. I remember the license was \$3.50 when I was a kid. It's like everything else.

I buy for myself, my husband and my son. So, I have 3 licenses to buy. When I'm paying \$27 times 3...

They are trying to make it easier for us in that now, especially if you hunt, you can buy one license, a combination for hunting, fishing, all together.

- Q.** When you buy a license, do you buy a freshwater license even if you do saltwater fishing?

Yes, as sure as heck as I get a saltwater, I want to go freshwater fishing at a great place. If I don't have a license, I feel someone is standing over my shoulder.

- Q.** Tell me what you feel about the license.

When I buy the license, I feel it's like my driver's license. I do not have cops and patrol and other people to watch out for. It pays for all that, and then also the fishing. I know

what it goes for just like everybody else feels like. I understand it's for a benefit.

Q. Do most people you know buy a license?

Pretty much, yes. Because, we congregate with people that really like fishing. If you really like fishing, you respect what it's for generally. I had one friend that just was lazy and I rode him and rode him and rode him and finally he got caught and that taught him. Well, it's \$72. It's expensive.

Q. Is that what he got fined?

It was \$70 some. They can confiscate your boat and all the equipment. I don't think they should be able to confiscate the boat because you don't have a license. I think they are overstepping the boundaries of what they can do. It's excessive punishment. I think a fine of \$75 (if that's what it is, I thought it was higher) should be higher, but I don't think they should take your boat.

If you have illegal game, hundreds of pounds, they can take everything you've got.

I have a friend who is a game warden. That rule is on the book like so many other laws that we have. They have never (that he knows of) confiscated equipment for not having a license the first time. This is for habitual people who fail to comply. Right there he can radio in and find out if this happened before. Is it on record for this person being ticketed for not having a license. If he's habitual, they can take what he has.

Q. There are 2 different agencies out there, 1 for the marine and 1 for freshwater. Tell me, what branch of government are they in? Who are they?

I couldn't tell you.

The Game and Fish is a separate entity, Marine Patrol, not DPR, they come under, I just can't remember right now. For the freshwater, Game and Fish Commission, it's

separate. I think it is a state agency.

- Q. What do they do? They patrol, write tickets and what else?
They do studies and they set limits and since they've been collecting for the saltwater licenses, they have been able to put more people out there and generate more revenue. They have more and are doing more. The saltwater fishing had gotten really bad, and it's coming back. They catch illegal fishermen and poachers. I had a friend who was a marine patrol officer down in the Port Charlotte area. They caught drug dealers, poachers.
- Q. How do they improve the fishing? Why is the fishing better now than it was 5 years ago?
Fresh and saltwater - 70% of the people in that branch are under law enforcement. They have 10% biologist, 10% will work in the fish hatcheries to produce new fish. Inside their organization they are broken down to do different things. Most of the ones out there are doing law enforcement, but there are those behind the scenes that are doing the studies on particular species in the area, if they are thriving, if not, why. What we have to do is breed more fish, or do something to their habitat.
- Q. What is your impression of what the agency does?
You would think most of them would be enforcing the law but you can tell the difference by the way they help the environment by cleaning it up to make the areas... I think they actually get out there and do something. Like scientists and environmental people, they have clean ups and stuff like that to keep areas cleaner. They have law.
- Q. Are they big agencies? How many people are working?
A good question. I would probably call around. Pick up the phone book. I do career guidance and I had one young man who wanted to become a game warden. We read about it, looked it up and called one of the offices in the phone book,

and they said send him down we'll be glad to talk to him. That's all you do.

- Q. What is your overall impression of them as a government agency? Sometimes government agencies are held in disrepute. How do you feel about the wildlife people?

My opinion is that they are underpaid and understaffed. You consider the Marine Patrol and what they have to do as far as the enforcement branch. They cover the entire coastline of the State of Florida. You can be out here for days and never see a Marine Patrol. It's getting better.

- Q. But, are they doing a good job?

They are doing a good job with what they've got.

- Q. What would you like to see them expand?

They need more people.

They need more control, more say in what happens, and stop letting the legislators tell them what to do. Take the politics out of it.

You see an adverse position between the commercial and sportsmen. The commercial people say that's their livelihood, the sportsmen see the resources being depleted day in and day out.

- Q. What can the state do about that?

They have the law to restrict that. But, when you're talking about someone's livelihood, and the lobbyists are well-heeled in Tallahassee, everything comes down to us as residents of the state and the pressure.

- Q. What's your impression of the people doing this job?

I just never really thought about it. I never pay that much attention to it when I'm out there fishing. I haven't.

Something that bothered me tremendously a while back, I believe it was the Marine Patrol, was quite a bit of corruption. Money was hidden and contraband held on to.

That bothered me quite a bit. That began to tell me a lot and what's going on up there and who's manipulating who, and why that is going on and why it's allowed to go on. Why it gets out of hand. Maybe when you don't get paid enough and you have this large area to cover and so much responsibility, you are susceptible to some of these things.

Anyone that comes to Florida is appalled at what people get paid down here as far as starting salaries for state government jobs. It doesn't equate to other states.

Q. In terms of higher or lower?

Lower. The big picture so to speak. I think money and overpopulation, lack of money.

Q. Well should the agency maybe try to get more people to go fishing so it makes more money?

I don't know how they would do that.

I've got plenty of people to fish with.

Q. What I'm asking is how can they generate more money? The alternative is a higher price on your license. So the pay off is either twice the number of fishermen or twice the cost for individual licenses.

The problem is not just the fishermen sharing the resources. Sometimes I don't fish, I just go boating. Now I'm taking scuba diving, so it takes the fishing picture out a little bit. We're not the only people that use the resources of the waterways so I think it needs to be spread out.

Q. How would you do that?

That nasty word, tax, that people don't like to hear. We have to pay for the people who are utilizing the resources. Other people are the ones selling things like Sports Authority and Sports Unlimited. Those people could share on the profit they are making.

They will just pass it on down to us.

Q. How would you do that?

I think if the fishing improves a little bit people will do that. I think that everybody who is serious about fishing would pay a little bit more for their license. Boaters should have to have registration fees.

Q. Should the agency be doing anything to insure that you don't quit buying that license?

Improve the environment, the conditions.

I think they could come up with a family-type license. We're looking at 3 or 4 licenses for individuals whereas in my family I'm usually the only one that goes so I have one license. If they gave the family an option to get a family-type license, it's usually just the son that goes out there (rarely the daughters), but if they had a family license you would see sons and daughters. It would be something to get out there instead of going to the movies on the weekends, we could all go fishing, we're all covered and licensed and don't have to look over our shoulder.

Instead of taking a family to a movie, we could take them fishing.

We took our son to Alaska and I had to buy him a fishing license, he was 15. It was a state license.

Q. How much was the license?

We had a 14-day license and it cost us \$30+.

It's about the same as Florida's license. It's 10 days and it's about the same, around \$30.

They have the combination license, the fishing and hunting licenses. You can get a moose stamp, etc. to put on it. It surprised me how cheap it is by having a combination stamp. When you start putting freshwater, saltwater, snook, shellfish, and start adding all these little ones, you think that is a lot of money you are putting out.

Q. Have either of these agencies ever done anything for you where you could say, "this is something I got".

I know they put down artificial reefs, even I don't know who did it. This is to increase the fish population in the Bay. These are the kinds of things somebody did.

I want to answer the question as to who puts the barges down. One of my desires when I get rid of my third daughter is to get my diving license. I had this big chart regarding federal projects. I remember reading at the bottom of the chart where all the dive sites are.

- Q. You say a dive license. Is that another license you have to buy?

You have to be certified.

- Q. It sounds really complicated to go fishing down here, all these stamps and all the different species and slot limits, etc. How hard is it to figure all this out?

When we go fishing, on our seat there is a yard stick. We put the tail and the head up there and we measure it.

- Q. How do you know what to measure? Where do you get that information?

The Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission puts out a booklet that is about 35 pages, probably 4 inches high and 4 inches wide that gives you the bag limit and size limit on each species of freshwater. There also is one put out for saltwater.

A lot of bait shops have tide charts and information regarding size limits.

You have to learn what the different fish are. You have to get a book, or talk to somebody. If you catch something you don't know about someone around you will know what it is.

- Q. Does the state supply these books so you can tell these fish apart?

Yes they do.

- Q. What about when you are in the ocean, how do you know what you can and can't do?

That is a little tough. If he stops you, you try to explain that you didn't know what it was.

- Q. Is there a fishing season?

Yes, for instance redfish. It's publicized in the newspapers, Florida Sportsmen and some of the periodicals.

- Q. How difficult are those regulations to understand?

A lot more complicated today then they were 10 years ago. It used to be pretty much cut and dry.

- Q. Today, are they really hard to figure out?

If you were just starting out in saltwater it would be confusing and uncomfortable.

Usually when I go out I try to check for the seasons and length. A lot of times I don't because I don't keep them unless I'm going after specific fish.

- Q. How often do these regulations get changed?

Sometimes it will be 4 to 5 years, sometime from 1 year to the next. It depends on the season and the quantity. They get changed mostly through biological surveys.

- Q. Who changes them and how does that process work?

To my understanding I get a book by the FCA (Florida Fishing Commission). They will tell you all the latest, what they are doing. It's like a newsletter.

- Q. How do you get that?

It's almost like a club status, but you send money and it's like a support for the fisheries. They are supported by donations (like a subscription). I first heard about it at a seminar downtown. The suppliers come in and sell all their fishing equipment and people talk about how to catch certain fish. Frank Sargeant, who is well known

throughout Florida and is respected for things he says, recommends this club because they are trying to increase the fishing population (the FCA).

- Q. How much does this newsletter cost you?

It's part of being a member. They say they recommend \$30 a year.

- Q. Are most of you familiar with this?

I've heard of it but I don't participate in it.

- Q. Gary, where do you get your information?

The newspaper. I don't get a lot of periodicals, just pick up the newspaper. A lot of times it doesn't matter what the newspaper says, if I want to go fishing, I will go fishing. If it's somewhere convenient, I'll go, otherwise I just go to one of my usual spots and set up camp for the day.

- Q. And, you don't worry about the regulations changing?

I really don't. I try to keep up with what I'm catching. If I don't know, it's going back in. I use the tide charts and the information in the back of those because I mostly saltwater fish. I don't concern myself too much with the change in regulations. I do try to pay attention to what I'm catching. If I catch something good, I'm going to take it home. I might catch one speckled trout; whether it's a keeper or not, I'm going to go ahead and release it. I'm not out there just to catch one speckled trout. If I can get 4 or 5 within the first hour that I'm out there, then I'm going to keep them.

- Q. I want to explore a little bit more about the regulations. You said if I was to go out marine fishing, and new to the sport, it might be confusing. Would it be confusing enough that it would keep me from doing it?

A beginner, very possibly.

It's conceivable that when they give you your license you list

on 8 1/2 x 11 letter size the different seasons of fishing, the size limit. I have caught a fish and took the book out and tried to find it on the list before throwing it back.

I did that the last time with an amberjack. I forgot what the length had to be.

- Q. But after you fish a while, you usually become acquainted with the ones you are usually after.

It's not that hard to grasp.

- Q. Richard, since you are primarily freshwater, how complicated are freshwater regulations?

I never really found it complicated at all. It's just a matter of your license, certain lakes are well-patrolled like Myaka is. You can't harm the wildlife, you have the bass limits and the size of the bass. I have never had difficulty with it.

- Q. Would it be complicated enough to someone who has never fished before to discourage them?

The only complication to bass fishing that I can remember when I first started fishing is that I really did not know where to go or where to start freshwater fishing. Getting comfortable with where to go was the biggest complication. The instinct is to catch, not so much the rules and regulations in between. The desire is to catch the fish and enjoy your experience.

- Q. Fred, what do you think about the regulations and how difficult they are to understand? Are they overwhelming or not?

Well, I think what might stop someone from fishing may not necessarily be that, but if they did get a license and go out and fish and get caught, that might upset them and then it might make them stop.

- Q. How easy would it be for someone to unintentionally violate

the regulations?

As far as the bag limits, sizes and species, it would be easy since they are so different. If you are not used to fishing, you would not know what they are. It would be easy to violate that. If you were to throw them all back, then it would be alright.

- Q. That sounds like the most complicated thing in the regulations is the size of the fish, slot limit, is that what you call it?

I'm not sure that it's the most complicated thing in the regulations or not. I've heard that you have to have a saltwater license even if you are wading. If it's above a certain height (even if it's chest deep) you have to have a saltwater license. If you are fishing from an island or a dock and you had to get there by boat, then you are suppose to have a saltwater license, I think. I don't know that, so there are some gray areas. I look for that. I read the paper.

- Q. Jennifer, what is the most complicated part about the regulations for you?

I guess the different fish, the different size limits. It's just a pain, because I have to remember this, and remember that. It doesn't really bother me.

It doesn't bother me at all because I don't even keep the fish because I don't like to clean fish. If my friend wants to keep them, that's her problem.

- Q. You've never had a problem with the regulations?

No.

- Q. Have any of you ever had a problem with the regulations where anything has ever happened to you as a result of the regulations.

I have never been approached.

We were at a state park and they were running trot lines at night. The regulation states they have to be out of the

water by sunrise and no more than 20 hooks. It states in the river. We were not in the river, we were at the far side of the lake and the deputy came by and told us we were not to run trot lines. They pulled the book out. The book does not say you cannot run trot lines in the lake, just in the river. He said "I know it's in here somewhere." He said not to do it anymore. I thought, he doesn't even know what the regulations are and he's telling us we can't do it.

I was fishing at a lake, in my back yard, and I had a game warden approach me because I did not have my fishing license on me. My house was right there. I wanted to walk in my house and get my fishing license, but I got a \$60 ticket because I did not have my license on me. He was apologizing because he told me since I was a lady he did not want me to not fish. I was sitting on my dock, fishing in my lake and I got a \$60 ticket because I did not have my fishing license on me.

It seems kind of stupid that you have to have a fishing license in your own lake anyway.

Q. Apparently there seems to be in some areas a problem where a lot of people fish without a license. Do you think they are justifiable in being that stringent about the regulation.

That's an overkill. That should have been contested.

When you're pulled over for your driver's license, you have to exhibit it upon demand, but when you go to court you produce that you did have a fishing license or driving license at the time you got the citation, you are usually dismissed.

Q. Do you think there are a lot of people who fish without a license in Florida?

There is a certain percentage that drives without a license. It's enforced according to how it's patrolled.

Q. Fred, what do you think, are there a lot?

At the time it was \$75, it would probably pay you not to ever get a license. You could just pay that fine now and then, every 5 to 6 years it would come out cheaper than buying a license.

Q. Do you think a lot of people do that?

I think some do it, but most of the people that enjoy fishing realize that it's going to take some money to do this. If you have been here for any length of time you have seen a decline and it's because of the commercial and sport fishing pressure.

Q. Do any of you feel fishing without a license is a problem in Florida? Is this a big issue for the State of Florida?

I think it would be your occasional people who go out there once every 3 to 4 years that don't have licenses. The people like us who do go on a regular basis go ahead and get our licenses. One reason is we don't want to get caught. Your occasional fishermen fish without a license. I don't think it's a major problem.

Q. How important is it for you to catch a big fish compared to little fish?

When I was freshwater fishing as a kid in Tallahassee, fishing in Lake Jackson, I assure you I probably have eaten 10-pound bass. Now, I just shudder to think what I've eaten. It should have been hanging on the wall. But now, no. If I just catch a few fish, yes I would like to catch big ones... you don't know what you are going to catch next in saltwater.

Especially if I caught a big one, I would not want to keep it. I would more like to photograph it. I keep a camera with me. I will keep a fish alive all the way back and will let it go if that's what I'm going to do. I'll keep it if it's oversized and I haven't had a fresh fish in a while. For the most part, how important it is to catch a big one? It's not. I have a lot of fun. I don't like going out unless I

think I'm going to catch one. I prefer to catch fish. I check the tides, I don't like fishing in the cold, I don't like having my fingers freezing, but if I do, I'm not enjoying fishing. I don't fish much in the winter. Going after the big fish is fun. You can talk about it with your friends.

Everybody wants to catch big fish when you're fishing. When you're hunting, the bigger deer you shoot, the better. I think it's more important that we make sure there are plenty of fish around to be caught and that you can go out and actually catch fish. Would I rather go out and really catch big fish all day long, or go out and catch fish all day? I would rather catch more fish then catch a big one. If I had my choice, I would rather catch big fish all day.

I would like to catch the big one. When I go I usually use a couple of medium-weight poles and I'll have one bigger pole that I might put a pin fish on. When that drag goes and it starts screaming, it has everyone up and down the pier going. It is an excellent feeling to catch a big fish, it makes a better story too. I agree with Fred that I would rather go out and catch fish, instead of just catching that one big one. If I'm not getting a bite every 15-20 minutes, it gets kind of boring. I can enjoy the company that I'm with for so long, for a few hours, but as long as I'm catching fish I can stay out there all day and all night. There is no time involved as long as I'm catching a fish. But the big ones, yeah they are fun.

I read an article when I was waiting to come in here, it answers how a lot of us feel. There's a guy named William Perry in 1932 in Lake Montgomery, Georgia who caught the world record bass (22 pounds). They still talk about it to this day. It's a kick and he's still remembered for it even though he did 100 other things in his life. It was a real thrill to him. Yes, I'd like to go out and catch the big fish.

It's not that important to me. Just to catch a fish is exciting to me.

- Q. You have been a commercial fisherman. You have seen all kinds of fish. How important now, in your recreational fishing, is the size of what you're catching?

It depends on what I want to set my goals at. If I'm going out there after work with my fly rod, I don't care if I catch a fish at all. If I'm going out there on my lake and it's 10 o'clock at night and there's a full moon, I'm expecting to catch a big one. If I don't, I'm a little disappointed. If I'm going out in the Gulf, I am expecting to catch my limit. It depends on what my goals are when I set out.

I enjoy going out and catching the big fish. When I go out fishing with my husband, my goal is to get one big one. There are times we go out and we both catch nice fish. We both caught 8-pound bass back to back, and we've gone out and caught little ones back to back. I'm like any fishermen, I'd love to really snag a big one. But size doesn't really matter.

Usually I let the big ones go because they're breeders. The more you put back, the better it will be later on. Doesn't really matter as long as I get to catch something. Tonight he's in my freezer. I'm going to have it mounted.

- Q. Have any of you ever had a fish mounted?

All the fish I had mounted were blue gill. We caught a 48-pound wahoo in the Keys and they told us it was going to cost \$600 to mount it. It tasted great!

- Q. Have you ever contemplated, what would be the factor that you would say would cause you to no longer fish?

Death.

Physically unable.

Physically unable, health.

- Q. There's nothing else in your life that would cause you to give this up. How bad would the fishing have to get before you would quit?

No fishing if the lakes and rivers were so bad that you would

have to go 100 miles out.

Q. Do you see any potential for that happening?

Not in my lifetime.

Maybe it's comparing apples to oranges, but in the 1950's, dad used to take us over to the beach in Clearwater. It was the most pristine thing you ever saw. No wild teenagers, you would go out and enjoy God's gift to Florida. I would imagine if I was going to one of my favorite lakes and I saw the same thing I see now, this density of people out there, it would take the natural joy away from me and I would probably withdraw back from me and maybe not pursue it until a time they were not there.

I think what's coming eventually, if it continues to grow the way it is, we're going to have to start paying more to live here. It's inevitable. Educational costs and other costs keep going up.

So many things have changed since I was a kid. Right across the road right here, there was a pond about, 150 yards, and I caught a 7-1/2 pound fish in there. I caught a truck load of bass in Trout Lake. Just past here on Lake Carrollwood Drive there were 2 ponds that aren't there anymore that we caught fish in. There are not as many places to go, so what Richard was talking about, is the density has increased tremendously on the ones you can get on.

Q. Do you foresee this being bad enough where you would give up fishing all together?

No. On my own lake, other than going fly fishing, I don't care if I catch anything, I do all my fishing at night not during the day. They are not out there in the ski boats doing 60 miles an hour at night. It's peaceful and quiet and nobody else is out there. I catch a lot of fish at night.

I'm concerned for children that will be here in 2010. I don't think Florida will be a very pleasant place to deal with.

Researchers' Analysis

This group consisted of individuals who had been actively fishing from 4 to 30 years. They fished in both salt and freshwater and included one individual who held a commercial fishing license, but did not use it for personal income at the time of the focus group. The group consisted of individuals who ranged from a few years to lifetime residency in Florida.

Family Issues/Socialization

The members of this group displayed the most satisfactions with fishing around issues of socialization. Fishing was generally considered a part of the family relationships or friendships.

The next door neighbor took me freshwater fishing when I was about 23 or 24 and we've been friends ever since.

I started fishing probably when I was about 3 or 4 going fishing with my grandparents. We did more playing than we did fishing... My grandmother is too old (now), my grandfather is gone. (I fish) just with my friends.

I take a couple of girlfriends after work and have a lot of fun... We may not even talk to each other for a half hour or so. We just stand up there staring or thinking, or remembering different things. It's relaxing, we call it bonding.

I have 9 brothers and sisters and if one of them wasn't going (fishing), the other one was. We got to tag along. It started out pretty much like playing and eventually got into just enjoying the fishing.

Teenagers suddenly get other interests. My son is starting to come back to fishing. He loves fishing... probably more than I do. The other teenager he has other things to do.

My kids have always been fishing. The first time my youngest went camping, he was 12 days old. We went camping and fishing then with my parents. All my kids have been brought up camping, fishing. They now are taking friends camping and fishing. It has always been a good outlet for

kids.

I think a lot of times people are not oriented into this kind of sport. They don't get into it as they are older. I had 2 sisters and no brothers and my father loved to fish. We were at the reservoir or at the different lakes and ponds fishing and we were treated just like the boys. We went out fishing, played ball and did everything just like the boys did, and camped and I liked it and all my kids like it. And now, for Christmas, I bought him a tent. My grandson got a sleeping bag, and they are going to start camping and fishing. I think it's more or less passed on to the generations because I have friends who hate to fish and they go camping but they don't fish because they never did.

I guess you have to be the kind of person that has to enjoy fishing. I guess you are right about being brought up in it. When you are a small child and you are taught to fish, you don't even think about it being dirty. It's part of your learning.

At the same time, my little brother hates to fish. He was brought up just like I was. He went as many times as I did when we were little. We're pretty close. We play golf together a lot and do a lot of other things together. When it comes to fishing, he'll go, but he doesn't like it.

Naturalistic/Outdoors Experience

Fishing was also seen as a valuable outlet from daily routine and as a way to get outdoors. The naturalistic values and issues around relaxation were important to this group.

I just put on a pair of cut-offs, I take my fly rod, walk down to the lake and wade out to my waist and try to catch some fish. That's relaxation. The other thing is, when I'm serious about it, it's the challenge. At this time of year I'm doing a lot of hunting also. It's just the challenge of your knowledge against the wit of that fish.

I'm a real estate agent. It's pretty busy. I'm around buildings, houses, everything else. I'm around people. I

get out there and try to get the most secluded spot. Just get out there in the trees. I go out with friends a lot of times if I can.

I'm not married, but I will go with some friends from work, guys that like to fish. I like to go with someone that likes to fish all day.

For me, there are many things. But what I do remember are memories of being in certain places... if it's not too hot you will see some of the most beautiful birds, more alligators than you have seen in your life. Just some of the most pristine Florida land you have ever wanted to see, in fact they advertise that it's like when the Spanish first discovered it. So there you are, and if you ever saw a hawk take a fish out of the water, or a deer walk right into the water and drink while you're fishing, it's absolutely gorgeous. One time a friend and I hooked into 23 bass... and we took about 8 back. We cooked up bass with macaroni and cheese. I still haven't forgotten that day. That's a memory for me, and that's why you go back at it again and again.

Utilitarian/Food/Catching Fish

Neither size of fish nor number of fish caught were as important as naturalistic or socialization values. This is not to say that catching fish is unimportant, but rather that it is less of a factor by a considerable margin than socialization and far less important than values of being outdoors.

If I have a couple of days, I go fishing with my kids at times, or the people I work with. It's nice if you catch fish, but I always have a good time even if I don't.

Catching fish is really not important. I enjoy going to fish to fish. I have sat in the boat all day and caught nothing and have enjoyed it just as much as when I have caught a bunch of garbage fish or had some and lost them. I enjoy going out and sitting in a boat with my husband and fishing and being with him all day because that is our quiet time together.

If I just catch a few fish (it's alright), yes, I would like to catch big ones... you don't know what you're going to catch next in saltwater.

If I caught a big one, I would not want to keep it. I would more like to photograph it... how important is it to catch a big one? It's not.

I don't like going out unless I think I'm going to catch one. I prefer to catch fish. Going after the big one is fun. You can talk about it to your friends.

Everyone wants to catch big fish when you're fishing. When you're hunting, the bigger deer you shoot, the better. I think it's more important that we make sure there are plenty of fish around to be caught and you can go out and actually catch fish. Would I rather go out and really catch big fish all day long or go out and catch fish all day? I would rather catch more fish than catch a big one. If I could, I would want to catch big fish all day.

I would like to catch a big one... When that drag goes and it starts screaming, it has everyone up and down the pier seeing what is going on. It is an excellent feeling to catch a big fish, it makes a better story too... I would rather go and catch fish instead of just catching that one big one... I can enjoy company that I'm with for so long, for a few hours, but as long as I'm catching fish, I can stay out there all day and all night. There is no time involved as long as I'm catching fish. But the big ones? Yeah, they are fun.

Access/Opportunity

Generally, active anglers have made fishing an integral part of their lifestyle. In Florida, opportunity and access do not seem to be an issue for this group and the ease with which one can go fishing makes the experience less of a mental as well as a logistical effort.

Last year was a very good year for my business so I didn't do as much fishing as I normally do. I usually take off once a week for a full day, on Thursday. Near the end of the

year I was just working, working, working. This year I hired someone to work for me so I can (go fishing) more. I hired an assistant to help me.

I guess I really didn't realize how important (fishing) was. I watch fishing on TV on Saturdays. I spend a lot of time looking at tackle in stores whether I'm buying it or not and I'm buying tackle I don't need. I buy reels and rods I don't need. I guess I've bought 2 since the year started and I'm looking at the third one in the catalog.

I have another sports interest. I also bowl. I would not give up fishing just for bowling.

Agency Image/Regulations

There was a general perception that fishing in Florida had declined in recent years. The reasons for this change were associated with environmental changes and, in general, this group was not especially unhappy about regulations specifically, but rather with governmental regulation in general. The group did not have much awareness of why certain regulations were in effect and they did not have a clear picture of the state agency responsible for regulation.

It's not as good as it was 5 years ago.

Let's take bag limits for example. In the late 50s and 60s, you had no problem getting your limit wherever you went. Now the bag limits have been reduced, and you have a hard time really meeting that reduced limit.

Forget fishing for snapper. They have so many size limits you can't even keep track of them.

You have to carry a computer with you to figure out what you can keep.

They have cleaned up the pollution. Tampa Bay for a while got to be terrible, but it's finally coming back around and getting a little more action.

There are more fish. They are putting artificial reefs out, sinking old barges, grass flats. We used to have beautiful grass on the bottom which supported the shrimp and the small fish that the bigger fish would come in and eat.

Because of pollution, all that grass died. Now, they have replanted the grass and cut down on the pollution. The shrimp are coming back, the small and bigger fish are coming back. It's a chain. The bag limits and size limits have helped considerably also.

They've stopped the shrimpers from dragging nets. It killed all the small fish you might catch.

Most of (the agency personnel) out there are doing law enforcement, but there are those behind the scenes that are doing the studies on particular species in the area, if they are thriving, if not, why. What we have to do is breed more fish or do something to their habitat. They are doing a good job with what they've got.

The Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission puts out a booklet that is about 35 pages... that gives you the bag limit and size limit on each species of freshwater (fish). There is also one for saltwater.

I really don't (worry about regulations). I try to keep up with what I'm catching... if I don't know, it's going back in... I don't concern myself too much with the change in regulations. I do try to pay attention to what I'm catching. If I catch something good, I'm going to take it home. If, I might catch one speckled trout, whether it's a keep or not, I'm going to go ahead and release it. I'm not out there just to catch one speckled trout. If I can get 4 or 5 in the first hour that I'm out there, then I'm going to keep them.

(Regulation complexity would bother) a beginner, very possibly. But after you fish a while, you usually become acquainted with the ones you are usually after. It's not that hard to grasp.

I think what might stop someone from fishing may not necessarily be (regulations), but if they did get a license and go out and fish and (get a ticket), that might upset them and then it might make them stop.

I never really found (regulations) complicated at all. It's just a matter of your license, certain lakes... you can't harm

*the wildlife, you have the fish limits and size of the bass.
I have never had difficulty with it.*

*I guess the different fish, the different size limits. It's just a
pain, because I have to remember this and remember that.
It doesn't really bother me.*

Costs

In general, this group did not feel the costs of fishing licenses were a major problem. They were, however, concerned with issues of equity. The group recognized that fishing without a license was a problem, but they did not feel it was a major issue.

*(License buyers) have to pay for the people who are utilizing
the resources. Other people are the ones selling things...
those people could share on the profit they are making.*

*I think if the fishing improves a little bit, people will (pay
more)... I think that everybody who is serious about fishing
would pay a little bit more for their license. Boaters
should pay to have registration fees.*

Transcription: Ex-Anglers

Demographic Characteristics

white male moderator

1 African-American female, 3 white females

1 African-American male, 5 white males

Q. Tell me a little bit about yourself.

I've lived in Florida for about 20 years now. I grew up in Wisconsin. I did quite a bit of fishing as a child growing up, and since then I was in the service and in my profession I traveled an awful lot and slipped away from the sport of fishing, if you will.

Q. Did you fish here in Florida?

Nothing serious. Again, my work here, I'm a civil engineer and I travel throughout the country and have really gotten out of it.

I'm married to a fisherman. My dad was a fisherman and my 2 brothers like to fish and so when I got married I started fishing with my husband. Now I am the mother of a teenage daughter who doesn't drive yet, so my fishing days have kind of ended. I'm more of a taxi driver now. I'm not originally from here but I've lived in Florida almost 30 years.

Q. Did you fish here in Florida?

I have fished freshwater with my husband and saltwater also.

Q. How long has it been since you went fishing in Florida?

Well, I still go occasionally on a Sunday afternoon in a boat but I'm not into fishing anymore like I used to be. I just go to be a part of the family basically.

I was raised in New York and did a bunch of saltwater fishing..., and freshwater upstate, for the most part. After that I went into the service and have lived all over the

world and did a little fishing here and a little fishing there. I've been in Florida since '76. I probably haven't gone fishing in 6-7 years. I have fished here in Florida in saltwater, deep-sea fishing, some freshwater fishing.

I am a native of Florida. I fished when I was a kid, mostly in lakes and particularly enjoyed bass fishing. Most of my fishing now is done in the ocean. It's about the only kind of fishing I like to do. I take at least 10 trips a year. I usually go to Clearwater or Tarpon Springs and take a party boat out.

I grew up in Ohio, primarily freshwater fishing. I've been down in Florida for about 8 years. I used to fish down here. My father would make trips down here to bass fish the St. John's River and Lake Okechobee. I haven't fished in about 8 years. Primarily, I stopped fishing before I got down here. It was just about the time I got out of college. Work took the place of fishing rods.

I'm a lifetime resident of Tampa. I've fished the saltwater around the bay and the gulf and freshwater fishing close to Tampa, bass fishing and such. I've gotten away from it the last 4 or 5 years. I sold my boat. I have fished but very little in the past 2 years.

Well, I am a resident here from Florida. Most of my fishing, particularly freshwater was when I was younger, in my late teens and 20's. I was never really very good at it, can't say I really liked it that much anyway. I've done more saltwater fishing off of piers and bridges. I haven't gone fishing in probably 3 years, and before that about 7 years. That's pretty much the extent of my fishing experience.

I'm originally from Maryland and used to fish with my family, saltwater fishing. I haven't been fishing for about 10 years. We have a boat and you would think I would pick it up again, but instead I started skiing and doing underwater activities. I've lived in Florida for about 9 years. I have never fished here.

I was born and raised in Philadelphia. I moved to Florida in

1984. I met my husband, and he used to fish constantly. It was like you have no alternative, you learn how to fish. I started learning how to saltwater fish first and graduated to freshwater, and I probably haven't been fishing since my son was born in 1989. Last time I fished was '89, '90. I'm originally from New Jersey and did a lot of freshwater fishing up there in lakes and rivers and have been down in Florida for about 14 years. I did a little bit of freshwater fishing in the beginning but grew into fishing saltwater. I still go fishing here in Florida. My son is an addict, he goes every single day.

Q. Tell me how did you get started fishing.

Father.

Dad.

Father.

Friends.

Boyfriends.

I never knew anything about fishing. I grew up in Philadelphia, and then moved to New Jersey. Never thought about fishing, let alone touching a worm or a minnow. When we moved down here we were constantly going fishing. I do miss it. It was relaxing. It started off I would sleep most of the time. After I caught my first drum that weighed about 15-20 lbs. that really got me into fishing. I catch sheepshead, angel fish. I miss it because it was relaxing.

Q. Why don't you go?

My son, he was premature. Basically both of us practically stopped fishing. My husband had to stay home with him and his relaxation was on weekends when I was home from work, he would get a chance to go out. He started back to work last year and now there is no time. The last time he got the boat ready and was going down St. John's River, he heard the weather forecast that there were going to be high winds. Now he's trying for next Thursday, it's

a full moon. He watches the moon signs and fishing programs on television and tapes. I guess he has about 25 rods and reels, a freshwater tackle box, a saltwater tackle box, a lure box, you name it, he has it. I lost my tackle box because he gave it to my son. I guess I'm out of the picture. My son is only 4. He keeps saying he wants to go fishing with dad. Hopefully I can send them both off fishing and I will get some peace and quiet.

Q. You're not going to go yourself?

Probably. I wouldn't miss his first fishing experience.

Q. How about you, why are you not into fishing any more?

Probably 2 reasons. I have young children, 2 little girls. When I'm trying to get them to go fishing, they're not into it at all. I grew up in the family atmosphere where that was our outing and enjoyed it tremendously. The family is not into it at all, so I don't push it. Second reason, I had a bad experience in '88, '89 on the water. I lost a friend in a boating accident.

I don't really have the time. My husband likes to go on Saturdays. On Saturdays my daughter likes to do other things, go to the mall, she has sporting events to go to and I have to take her. One of us has to be there to drive her around. My husband now gets a buddy to go with him instead of me. I got kind of turned off because we never caught any fish. I got bored going out. My husband can sit there all day, throw the line and reel it and never catch a fish and be happy. If the fish aren't biting, I'd rather be somewhere else.

I get fried when I'm out there. I just burn up. I used to like fishing because my dad would take me and I would only catch little ones, but I loved the experience of it. Now I'm married, and let my husband go off and take the boat and leave me at home and I'll do whatever I want to do.

Q. So your fishing is not a family experience?

It's just my husband and I, and it's a nice break for us. He goes out and takes his friends with him and I do whatever I want to do. We get together later and go skiing.

Q. What about you?

I grew up in Lakeland and moved to Polk County which has a lot of phosphate pits. It was kind of an adventure. I did it until my late teens, mostly freshwater at that time. I was more successful in catching mosquitos than I was with fish. The saltwater, I enjoy more since it's more of a relaxed time. When I do that, it's usually off of a pier or bridge and with friends at night. You catch the sea breeze. It wasn't my thing to sit out there for hours and hours.

When I think of my experience it was back in the '50s and it wasn't for pleasure or enjoyment, it was for survival. We fished to supplement our food stock. My dad was adamant about either you go fishing or you clean the fish when you get home. I have 2 brothers and a sister. When you mentioned the word fish I was the first one in the boat. I did not want to have to clean the fish. We not only fished for our own personal consumption but also sold the extra fish that we had. It was a way to make extra money. I never enjoyed fishing at that time. As I got older I started bass fishing because I enjoyed fishing with a reel instead of a cane pole. I got away from fishing when I went to college and I left Florida in '73 and returned about 10 years later. Now my fishing is strictly enjoyment and I just like to go out in the ocean and like to get away from the hustle and bustle and once I get out on the Gulf I feel so relaxed and like I'm leaving everything behind and I just enjoy myself. I don't have a family, I live by myself. I don't own a boat. I just usually go out on the party boat in Clearwater. It's sort of like my get away from what's happening here on land.

Well, I started out when I was about 9 years old. The family moved to a house that was less than 100 feet from the Atlantic Ocean. We had a number of fishing rods in the

garage. You'd come home from school and would get out there and throw them in the water and do some surf fishing.

Q. Did your whole family fish?

No, not really. My father did a little bit, but I did more than the rest did. I fished more with my friends at the end of the block where we lived. We occasionally would go on a party-type boat as I got a little older. Not too far from your house was an area where they had a series of party boats. Back then it was really inexpensive to do that. I was very active in Boy Scouts, and they introduced me to freshwater fishing when we were on hiking or camping trips in upstate New York. I travelled around and did a little bit of fishing in California, Georgia and in Japan.

Q. How would you go about fishing in Japan?

Easy as here. Plenty of water around. Coming back from the states I was stationed in Georgia where my wife came from. My father-in-law lived in a little town that closed up on Wednesday afternoons and everyone went fishing, so I would take Wednesday afternoons off and would go with my father-in-law and his friends to a little lake in North Florida where they owned a little shack and we would go fishing. I have done very little fishing since then. My family does not fish. My father-in-law is getting too old to go out and fish. All through the years after I got married, and went back to Georgia on vacation, I would go fishing with my father-in-law.

I started fishing by the time I could hold a fishing rod and reel. I lived close to the water. Most of the fishing I did when I was a kid was saltwater fishing. That's what I lived closest to. As I grew up, I started doing some freshwater fishing. My wife and I had a bass boat until about 5 years ago. We bought a new home and didn't have any place to keep it, so we sold it. We got away from fishing. My wife enjoys fishing as much as I do. She

enjoyed it a lot more when we were catching fish. There were a lot of trips where we didn't catch anything. Freshwater fishing just seems to be that way.

- Q. Was not having the boat a major impediment?

Professional or bass fishing it is. You just about need a boat to do any serious bass fishing. Saltwater fishing you can do it from a pier or the shore some place. On occasion I still do. It's been quite a while since I have done any fishing in saltwater. We live on a small pond and there's not a lot of fish, but there are a few fish. I occasionally go back there and wet a line and catch a little something.

- Q. What do you get out of going fishing at the end of the day that you didn't have at first?

A sun burn. It's very relaxing. It's nice being out in the open air away from the telephone.

- Q. When you know you're going fishing is there anything particular you're looking forward to?

Just being outside, peace and quiet.

- Q. You don't have any goal set for yourself, like a 20-pound fish?

No.

My parents were down here for Christmas. My dad goes out fishing. I request he bring me fillets.

- Q. Why don't you go out for yourself though?

I use to shore fish off the bridges in Ohio. Down here shore fishing for bass, there are too many snakes, alligators. I have been over to Lake Tarpon just to see if anybody's catching anything. It takes you 2 hours to get your boat in the water. All you see is lines.

- Q. Does your dad fish when he comes down here?

He went to Lake Tarpon and said there were too many boats

out on the lake. He still goes fishing on the St. John's River. I wish he would go fishing first and then come over here. The boat is a big thing down here. You must have a boat for freshwater fishing.

The thing I look for is that I'm getting away from the hustle and bustle of the city life and just getting out on the ocean. It's so relaxing. I'm always meeting new people. Half the people on the fishing boats are from out-of-state. They give you their fish too. They clean your fish at the end of the day, they put your bait on. I've never gone out there when you didn't catch anything.

- Q. If you went out there and didn't catch anything how would you feel?

I wouldn't feel bad at all. The trip out there, they usually go in the water about 10-20 miles depending on how long you are going to be out there. The trip alone is worth my while because usually you go out about 8 o'clock. I go up on deck and just relax and just kind of unwind. It's like my therapy to be out on the water.

- Q. You have an interesting background. You were fishing as a means of family support, now you're doing it purely as recreation. Looking back on your whole life, how important is fishing to you now? Do you consider this an important part of your life or something you do occasionally?

Most of the times when I go fishing it's to get away. I look at it as a means of forgetting about current things I'm dealing with and go out there and unwind. I do a lot of thinking when I'm on water. It's a good way to meet people.

- Q. Do you think you could accomplish the same type of satisfaction from something that did not involve fishing?

I probably could. To me, it's just my therapy. I enjoy that. Just being on the boat is relaxing. It puts me to sleep.

- Q. A lot of you are saying different things. Could you substitute something for your fishing recreation?

When I was young I used to go with the family and I used to fish. Now I go out on the boat and do not fish, but still like the relaxation of being on the boat. I do something different. You still have the time you spend with your family. The phone's not ringing, the kids' friends are not over, you have them all to yourself.

I used to feel the same way. I enjoyed the fishing a lot, growing up with the family, the comradery of getting out with the guys and that was the thing to do. Then, the experience I had turned me off on that and I found I didn't miss it at all. I found other things that greatly replaced that. Your feeling of serenity and all that, I found other things that easily match that.

- Q. What would it take to get you to start fishing again? What would be necessary?

If my family would show interest in that, I definitely could do that again.

It's just finding the time to do it. I haven't personally found anything quite as relaxing. If I'm home and I'm trying to listen to music the phone will ring, or when I'm home I have my son constantly, or my husband will find something he wants or I'll feel there is something I should be doing instead of sitting down. I just don't find time to relax. Out on the water you have no interruptions.

- Q. When are you going to start fishing again?

Probably when it gets to the point that we can take my son out. Actually, that he gets to it enough where I can even relax. Right now I would be scared to death that he's going to jump overboard or something strange. I know when we go up to Pensacola (I have an uncle up there) we go to catfish farms. I enjoy that a lot because I knew I was going to catch something then. We compete against each other because my husband loves to brag. You ask

him, he's the best fisherman that God put on this earth. When I go, I have to catch something larger than him so he won't have anything to brag about. I listen to him and then say "I caught this...". Maybe if we get up there we can leave my son with my uncle and we can go out fishing. Well, I don't have an aversion to fishing, it's just that it's not one of the things I would really get out for. We're talking about being on the water and getting away, I found that I enjoy just canoeing more than fishing. I have friends out in Venice. I really enjoy just getting on the water. I haven't gone out on the boat, but I would be open to it. Generally when I have gone out on the boat, it's to go scuba diving. It would take a few friends saying let's do it some weekend, and I would probably do it. The outdoor scene and being out in the water... I have to admit when I caught something it was exciting, but the gaps in between. You can't really converse, because if you talk a little bit, then everybody is going "Sh..sh.. you will scare away the fish."

Q. *I'm not going to buy you a boat. What could I do to get you to go fishing?*

If you ask me to go, I'll go. I still have all my fishing equipment. I still have about 2 dozen rods and reels and 4 or 5 tackle boxes and every one of them is full. I lack a lot of time. I work which takes some of my weekends away from me. I'm a facility supervisor for General Telephone and I'm on call this weekend. If you ask me to go this weekend I couldn't even go.

Q. *Has that changed your life in the last 5 years?*

No, I've been a supervisor for the last 12 years now. It's something I've had to put up with for the last 12 years, an occasional weekend when I've been on call. We got to where we weren't using the boat a lot. We decided to buy the house, that wasn't difficult to have to give up. The place where we live, I have to keep the boat in the garage

or out of sight. I have 2 cars I need to keep in the garage. I really did not have a place for a boat. I could have stored it across town. It would have been inconvenient to get it to go fishing if we did that. We're a little more into camping right now. We have an RV and like to go up to Georgia and the Carolinas. When we go up there on vacation camping, we might do a little fishing, some trout fishing or whatever.

- Q. How difficult is it to go fishing, is it difficult to find places to fish?

The little lakes are all private, the ones that I know. Lake Tarpon is the only lake I know. It's not a bad lake to fish in but sometimes it gets crowded. There's the Hillsborough River, a number of small ponds and lakes within a couple hours drive.

- Q. What do you think, is it hard to find a place to go fishing in Florida?

No, they're not hard to find. There has always been a lake or the ocean to go to. What stopped me I guess is getting busy and doing other things. My son didn't really enjoy fishing and that kind of put a stop to it. My wife gets sea sick. I would go back to fishing. I have 2 grandsons. If they said, "Grandpa, take me fishing," we'd be fishing the next day. They haven't gotten involved in this. My son and my 2 grandsons are into soccer. Last weekend I went to 5 soccer games. That leaves no time to do anything else.

- Q. How difficult are these party boats to find out about? Is it pretty easy to do?

Very easy to do. If you call me and say let's go fishing on a lake, I wouldn't go. I would come up with an excuse not to go. I'm not a lake fisher. I like to be out on the ocean because I get a different feeling being out on the ocean than on a lake. I would not fish off a pier in my life. I

wouldn't do it. I look at going fishing as going out in the gulf or the ocean.

- Q. I could not convince you to go fishing out on a boat on a lake?
It would not be the same effect I described a while ago, as to how it helps me mentally when I'm out on a boat. When you get out there and can't see land sometimes I get a different perspective about life. When I come back I appreciate what I'm coming back to.
- Q. What about you? What does it take to get you to become a fisher person that goes out there? I got the impression you are not really avid about fishing?
It goes in cycles. I don't care for freshwater fishing down here as much as up north. I'm from New Jersey. I like the saltwater fishing. I lived in Miami and saltwater fished there all the time. We went to the Keys, to Clearwater and the causeway.
- Q. How often do you fish down here in Tampa?
A few times a month. Not like my son who goes every day. I was the one who taught him to fish, since he was 2.
- Q. Let's say I came down here to Florida and I don't know anything about fishing. I have all the equipment I need. What's it going to cost me to go fishing in Florida?
A license. I think about \$15-\$18 now. You need a saltwater and a freshwater license. If you are on land you don't need a license, but if you are on a boat you need a fresh and saltwater license, because they will check. If you are on a party boat you don't need a license. It's included in their fee. They go out far enough where they don't need a license.
- Q. Who do you buy these licenses from?
Walmart, K-Mart, bait stores.

- Q. Why would you have to buy 2 licenses, one for saltwater and one for freshwater?

I think they are both combined because you get a stamp. I think you pay \$5 for salt and it's on the same license.

It's a state license. I'm sure the state is making money off of this. The Fish and Game Commission.

- Q. Do people fish without licenses?

Yes. If you are with someone who's fishing you have to have a license.

Yes. I've fished without a license. You're taking a chance. A lot of people don't even realize it. They check many times when you're out on the water. The game warden checks you, even out on the ocean. The marine patrol will check your equipment to see if you have life preservers, whistles, fire extinguishers. It used to be \$25.

- Q. Do they check for fishing licenses too?

If you're fishing. We got stopped because of a sign that said "no wake." They wanted to check, depending on the size of the boat, if you had the right equipment. He gave us a warning ticket for \$40 for a no wake zone.

- Q. Let's say I do buy a fresh and saltwater license. How do I find out where to go fishing?

When you get your license at K-Mart you get a book. There's a book listing every lake and depth in Florida. My husband ordered it.

- Q. I have a fishing license, and want to find a good place to go fishing. What do I have to know concerning rules, etc.?

There are size limits, catch limits.

Some fish can't be under 14". There are seasons for snook.

You can only catch them during certain times of the year.

- Q. Where do I find this out?

There's a book the Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish

Commission gives out when you get a license. There are different pocket books you can buy. The Miami Herald puts out a really nice book, colored pictures and details about the fish, the size bag limits and everything.

- Q.** Let's say I want to find out the best place to catch a particular fish, where do I look?

There's a page in the newspaper, an outdoor column, Frank Sargeant's, the bait shops. Once in a while on the news there's a program which tells you about the places to fish.

- Q.** So, it's not very hard to find out where to go fishing. What about these rules? How difficult are these rules to understand?

They are not difficult. A lot of times the marine patrol isn't really bad. They might give you a warning. You can't get too close to the power plant. They don't want you to get close to the cables, etc. so the marine patrol came around and gave us a warning. They were nice. They could have given us a ticket.

- Q.** When you go out on these boats do, they pretty much tell you what you can and can't do out there?

Yes, they know all the rules and have limitations on the size you can catch. They tell you whether you should keep it or not and whether it's edible.

- Q.** How much would that impact you if you had to worry about all that?

A lot. I don't want to worry about whether or not I will get a ticket. Some of these lakes are hard to get on. That's one of the reasons I don't want to go fishing anymore, you have to drive so far to find a lake, then you have to have a boat.

You might get on a lake, but what are you actually eating? I don't really know if I would want to eat something I've caught.

I used to worry about that. There are a lot of phosphate pits.

You see bass that are unbelievable in size. You have problems getting on the lake, crowding on the lake, concerns about pollution and the fish.

Lake Tarpon puts some sort of a chemical in the water to get rid of hydrilla. That bothers me when my husband brings something home from there. I won't eat it.

- Q.** What else about fishing you don't like?

It's kind of a nasty sport. The fish are slimy, nasty, smelly. Once you catch the fish and get them in the boat, they should fillet themselves.

The farms fillet fish for you. Admission is free, you catch the fish but you pay \$1.49 per pound for the fish. I don't know if you need a license.

- Q.** Some of you mentioned the Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission and the Marine Patrol. What do they do beside checking licenses?

They check for poaching, drinking, etc. You have to take boating courses now. They check for beer.

- Q.** Can you have beer in the boat?

When I had a boat that wasn't a big problem. It's kind of dangerous. It's like driving a car if you drink too much.

- Q.** What else do these commissions do?

They get your money for licenses, they check poaching, hunting out of season, manatee protection, environmental. I don't think they get the money, I think it goes to the state and they get whatever is budgeted for them.

I think they test several lakes for lead, etc.

- Q.** Are these agencies doing everything they could do or should do for fishing?

There's been a lot of talk about the Marine Patrol doing a lot of things they shouldn't be doing. There's been a big shake up in their organization about the higher ups taking

bribes, etc. My confidence is down just from the news reports. They are giving tickets for "no wake" when there really is no problem, then you hear about boating accidents and people getting killed. My confidence level is down.

- Q. What would improve your confidence level?

By not being involved in the water aspect, I don't know if anything could or would. I don't see myself having direct contact with them. It relates more to my opinion of the state bureaucracy, etc.

- Q. I asked you before what would it take for me to get you to go fishing. What about if I was the government, what could the government do to get you to go fishing?

Clean up the lakes. There's so much bacteria.

Besides the fact that we used to go up the St. John's because we couldn't find anything down here that was decent, we would not eat any fish out of the lake where we live. There are insecticides, pesticides that you put on your lawn that spills into the lake. You don't want to eat this. All the plant life, algae, etc. they should have some kind of public access where people can go. You don't want to go fishing because you don't know what you're getting out of the water.

There are places you can go where you can rent boats.

I took scuba diving. I don't know what agency does this, but there are man-made reefs that are just beautiful to go and watch the fish rather than catch it. Whatever the agency is that sees that the Black Thorn is sitting out there in 80' of water, it's a good place for fish to start to spawn around. I'm glad they are doing that work.

- Q. You don't know who does that?

No, I don't.

Corp of Engineers. The state has an artificial reef program also. They just organized it, it was DNR, it's now

Department of Environmental Protection.

There's a problem in that the scuba divers and the fishermen are going up to the same place. I've been afraid some times when I'm under the water. If I am fishing among the fish, someone else is dropping their line right there.

I do worry about people operating boats that do not know what they are doing and the proper right of way and how a fly-by on an anchored boat causes a big wake. Florida is a tourist state. You have a lot of people coming down that are unfamiliar with the area.

Q. I talked to some people earlier this evening who go fishing all the time. What's the difference between someone who fishes 40 times a year and someone who fishes 3 times a year?
It's a sport that some people really love.

Q. Do you have anything in your life you are really avid about?
No, not really. There are a number of things I enjoy. There's not really anything that I would say I really "live" for. I found that I have turned to other outdoor activities, like wilderness-type camping for the sake of getting away.

Q. Could you see fishing having the role for business contacts?
It's a big draw for people to want to go deep sea fishing.

Q. How much does it cost for deep sea fishing?
The party boats cost about \$30 for half days and \$50 for full days.

Q. Is that a good deal economically? Do you think you're getting good value.
Yes. Just the fishing license is expensive. If you take your boat out it could cost you at least that much.

Q. How big of an issue is the cost of the fishing license on top of all those expenses?
It's not.

- Q. Why do you suppose people don't buy licenses when they go fishing?

*Ignorance, or the hassle of having to get it.
You don't know where the money is going.*

- Q. What do you get for that license?

A little sticker, they guarantee you don't get fined if you get caught.

- Q. Did you ever get anything besides that?

I'm sure we have. They're part of growth, stop poachers, the safety aspect is excellent. I think all boats ought to be checked to make sure they have proper gear and that kind of stuff.

I think they provide a good service and they are out there trying to protect the environment, and trying to make us all safer by stopping those who are breaking the law and are speeding. What would it be like if they weren't there?

It's like any type of service. What's the price you are paying for this type of service. The cost for boat tags and fishing licenses just keeps going up. Where do we stop?

- Q. What about the alternative where the state, rather than raising the cost of the fishing licenses, were to try and get more people to go fishing to raise money (by selling more volume of fishing licenses). Would that be something they should look at?

Fishing is something you either like or don't like to do.

Maybe if they made licenses available at an easier place for purchase, for instance at the lakes.

Most of the lakes you go to, the tackle shops nearby have licenses.

- Q. Should the state look at ways to make money?

In the Carolinas you can buy a license for a day.

- Q. What can the state be doing for people to keep them from

dropping out of fishing?

When I play golf, I like to go to places where I'm not packed with 10 million people pushing me around the golf course. If I could go to a freshwater lake that I knew would not be full of people, I'd catch a lot of fish so I could eat them. That would be appealing to me.

Perhaps stocking the lakes.

I know a lot of the lakes such as Lake Tarpon, if you go on a Saturday, everyone is going to be skiing and the fish are not going to bite. You have to go out super early and go out there before dawn. In the afternoon, it's stopped. There are so many other activities on the water. You have to travel so far to get to a bigger lake.

- Q. What could a state agency do to get people to go out more?
Make some more lakes. Have access to lakes that are rarely fished. If they had access to something like this and limit the amount of people, this would be good.
- Q. Is it really hard to go fishing without a boat in Florida?
If you want to catch anything.
I'm terrified of alligators and snakes. Every pond I see, there are weeds, and this is where the alligators breed.
- Q. Are there any type of party boats that guide you down a lake?
I think maybe the St. John's River and Lake Okechoobe. At fish camps you see ads where you can hire a guide. Bait shops arrange day trips.
- Q. Would you do that?
If you are going to pay money, I'd rather go out on the ocean.
- Q. Tell me a little more about how important it is to catch fish.
If you knew you were going to catch a good number of fish, is that really important to you?
If the peacefulness and enjoyment were combined with that, that's very tempting.

I like to fish when the fish are biting. I like to catch fish. It's more fun for me to catch fish. I can't just sit there all day long and nothing happens. I also like to cook the fish we catch, and if we don't catch any then I'll have to figure out something else to cook.

Absolutely, when I used to fish it mattered a lot. Unless the fish were biting, after a couple of hours you really get bored. Part of the day when I used to fish with my father-in-law, you would fish a few hours, clean the fish and cook. There was a lot of comradery, then if you didn't have fish to cook, it slowed the day down because you didn't have anything for supper.

I like the thrill of catching fish. My husband always comes home and he hasn't caught anything so I feel like, why should I go? I'm not going to sit in the boat for hours on end.

Now my husband can sit there hours on end. He will go back day after day whether he catches anything or not. He's very patient.

- Q. You said that when you went fishing you didn't catch a lot. If you were to catch a lot of fish would it be a big impetus to you now?

It would help the situation. I always enjoyed the excitement of the catch. It would help, if there was always a good chance of coming back with 1 fish.

- Q. What are your chances of catching fish in Florida today?
I would say less chance that when I was a kid.

- Q. What do you think, you're the active fisher-person. Is that important?
Not to me, to the kids.

- Q. You already expressed that this is not an issue with you.
No, it's just getting up in the morning at 6:00 a.m., getting in the car, driving across the causeway, hardly any traffic on

the roads, smelling the salt air in the air, driving to the pier, getting your ticket, go have a little breakfast, and about 7:30 you start boarding the boat and then you meet people.

I think I want to go with him.

When I do it, it's because I like to get away. I like to talk to people. It's an opportunity for me to meet people.

You talked me out of going to work tomorrow.

I think he's in public relations.

Catching fish certainly breaks the monotony of being out there all day and not catching anything. My wife and I have gotten to where the biggest majority of fish we catch, we release back in the water anyway. We keep enough for a mess to eat, but everything else goes back.

Q. *Where's the inspiration to go back fishing if you go out there and you don't catch anything?*

It's different when you are in your backyard and you go out there and throw out the line. But, when you're making a day of it and you pay \$30-\$40 to go out there in a boat and this is what your aim was, and no one catches anything, it's discouraging.

I've done that. We started out at the end of Bartow. We stayed all night, got up early, didn't catch anything, got in the car and drove all the way over to Orlando. We got there, stayed out there and didn't catch anything, almost did not find our way back into the fish camp, I'm determined I'm going to catch a fish. We stayed overnight, and got a room. I called in to work and took a vacation day, to catch a fish, and still did not catch fish. It was too windy. I was ready to go back the next weekend because I was determined to catch fish.

Q. *Is there anything that any of you want to add about fishing in Florida that you think I ought to know?*

We did not touch on sport fishing, not the fishing we're talking about. I never caught a big fish. I think there are

people out there who do this just for the excitement.

- Q.** How is this different from the type of fishing you do George, sport fishing?

I've never done this before. I don't know much about it.

You're going after fighting fish, and fish that do things that make it exciting. You have marlin or tarpon.

My husband does this. He goes on a charter. Only 4 to 5 people go on this type of boat. They charge anywhere from \$300-\$500. It seems that a lot of people that come from up north go into the gulf on charter boats, especially around Boca Raton.

- Q.** This is part of a national study that is being conducted by a non-profit research firm out of Virginia who has money from the Federal Government. It's being done all throughout the United States. It's the second year of the study. We're looking at both hunting and fishing. We'll do the same types of things in 5 different states this year. This is part of a much bigger study that you've helped us design. The information you gave us tonight will go into designing this nationwide look at fishing and hunting.

I think that if the state did more as far as letting people know that the fresh waters were safe as far as eating the fish, and that they didn't have to worry about chemicals and whatever else is in the water, it might encourage people to go back out.

I think a lot of people confuse pollution with lakes that are just full of algae which is very common down here.

- Q.** So you would like more information on that?

Yes, I would like to know when the lakes were last tested.

Researchers' Analysis

In general, there was little difference in the values, satisfactions and motivations between active and inactive anglers. Inactive anglers had a generally lower involvement with the utilitarian aspects of fishing and a higher involvement with socialization factors.

Family Issues/Socialization

The factor of socialization was as important with the inactive anglers as active anglers. It is interesting to note that the primary reasons for a decrease in angling activity seem related to family issues for the most part. This substantiates the theory that socialization, especially with the family, is the primary motivation and satisfaction in angling and is also a major factor in angling drop-outs.

I'm married to a fisherman. My dad was a fisherman and my 2 brothers liked to fish and so when I got married I started fishing with my husband. Now I am the mother of a teenage daughter who doesn't drive yet, so my fishing days have kind of ended.

Well, I still go occasionally on a Sunday afternoon in a boat, but I'm not into fishing like I used to be. I just go to be a part of the family basically.

I use to fish (in Florida). My father would make trips down here to bass fish... I haven't fished in about 8 years.

I met my husband and he used to fish constantly. It was like you have no alternative, you learn how to fish.

I never knew anything about fishing. I grew up in Philadelphia and then moved to New Jersey. Never thought about fishing, let alone touching a worm or minnow. We moved down here and we were constantly going fishing. I do miss it. After I caught my first drum that weighed about 15-20 pounds, that really got me into fishing.

I lost my tackle box because (my husband) gave it to my son.

I guess I'm out of the picture. My son is only 4. He keeps saying he wants to go fishing with dad. Hopefully I can send them both off fishing and I will get some peace and quiet. (However) I wouldn't miss his first fishing experience.

I have 2 young children, 2 little girls. When I'm trying to get them to go fishing, they're not into it at all. I grew up in the family atmosphere where (fishing) was our outing and (we) enjoyed it tremendously. (My) family is not into it at all, so I don't push it.

I really don't have the time. My husband likes to go on Saturdays. On Saturdays my daughter likes to do other things, go to the mall, she has sporting events to go to and I have to take her. One of us has to be there to drive her around. My husband now gets a buddy to go with him instead of me.

I used to like fishing because my dad would take me and I would only catch the little ones, but I loved the experience of it. Now I'm married, (I) let my husband go off and take the boat and leave me at home and I'll do whatever I want to do.

When I think of my experience it was back in the '50s and it wasn't a pleasure... it was for survival. We fished to supplement our food stock. My dad was adamant about either you go fishing or you clean fish... When you mentioned the word fish I was the first one in the boat. I did not want to have to clean the fish. I never enjoyed fishing at that time... Now my fishing is strictly enjoyment and I just like to go out in the ocean and like to get away from the hustle and bustle and once I get out on the Gulf I feel so relaxed it's like I'm leaving everything behind and I just enjoy myself.

My family does not fish. My father-in-law is getting too old to go out and fish. All through the years after I got married and went back to Georgia on vacation, I would go fishing with my father-in-law.

When I was young I used to go with the family and I used to

fish. Now I go out on the boat and do not fish, but still like the relaxation of being on the boat. I do something different. You still have the time you spend with your family. The phone's not ringing, the kids' friends are not over, you have them all to yourself.

I enjoyed fishing a lot, growing up with the family, the camaraderie of getting out with the guys and that was the thing to do. Then, the experience I had (an accident) turned me off and I found I didn't miss it at all. I found other things that greatly replaced that. Your feeling of serenity and all that, I found other things that easily match that.

What stopped me I guess is getting busy and doing other things. My son didn't really enjoy fishing and that kind of put a stop to it. My wife gets sea sick. I would go back to fishing. I have 2 grandsons. If they said "Grandpa, take me fishing," we'd be fishing the next day. They haven't gotten involved. My son and 2 grandsons are into soccer. Last weekend I went to 5 soccer games. That leaves no time to do anything else.

Individuals who have recently relocated may have a difficult time establishing the necessary social ties to enable them to go fishing. Thus a new resident to a state may stop fishing even though the opportunity is available. In general, inactive anglers would probably fish again with support from friends and families and would be influenced by external factors such as access, information and service.

I used to fish off the bridges in Ohio. Down here shore fishing for bass, there are too many snakes, alligators. I have been over to Lake Tarpon just to see if anybody's catching anything. It takes hours to get your boat in the water. All you see is lines.

A few friends saying let's (go fishing) some weekend probably would do it. The outdoor scene and being out in the water... I have to admit when I caught something it was exciting, but the gaps in between. You can't really

converse, because if you talk a little bit, then everybody is going "sh..sh, you will scare the fish away."

If you ask me to go, I'll go. I still have all my fishing equipment. I still have about 2 dozen rods and reels and 4 or 5 tackle boxes and every one of them is full.

It goes in cycles. I don't care for freshwater fishing down here as much as up north. I'm from New Jersey. I like the saltwater fishing. I lived in Miami and saltwater fished there all the time.

Utilitarian/Food/Catching Fish

Inactive anglers placed some importance on actually catching fish as long as the experience was combined with socialization factors, convenient and in a good location. It appears everyone would like those conditions and therefore perhaps the stipulations placed on whether or not they would go fishing are so restrictive they make them meaningless. In general, utilitarian values were of less importance to inactive anglers in Florida.

I like to fish when the fish are biting. I like to catch fish. It's more fun for me to catch fish. I can't sit there all day long and have nothing happen. I also like to cook the fish we catch and if we don't catch any, then I have to figure out something else to cook.

I like the thrill of catching fish. My husband always comes home and he hasn't caught anything so I (feel) like why should I go? I'm not going to sit in the boat for hours on end.

When I play golf, I like to go to places where I'm not packed with 10 million people pushing me around the golf course. If I could go to a freshwater lake that I knew would not be full of people, I'd catch a lot of fish so I could eat them. That would be appealing to me.

(The state agency should) make some more lakes, have access to lakes that are rarely fished. If they had access to something like this and limit the amount of people, this would be good.

It's different when you are in your backyard and you go out

there and throw out the line. But, when you're making a day of it and you pay \$30-\$40 to go out there in a boat and this is what your aim was and no one catches anything, it's discouraging.

Costs and Regulations

Neither costs nor regulations seemed to play an important part in the reason these anglers did not currently fish or fished infrequently. They seemed well informed about the regulations and costs, but did not express any special concern about either. The cost of the fishing license was not a factor in their choosing to not fish actively per se.

A license? I think about \$15-\$18 now. You need a saltwater and a freshwater license. If you are on land you don't need a license, but if you're on a boat you need a fresh and saltwater license, because they will check.

I've fished without a license; you're taking a chance. A lot of people don't even realize it. They check many times when you're out on the water. The game warden checks you, even out on the ocean.

(I worry about regulations) a lot. I don't want to worry about whether or not I will get a ticket. That's one of the reasons I don't want to go fishing anymore.

Agency Image and Role of the Agency

Inactive anglers had low levels of factual information about the state agency. In fact, they were pretty unsure as to which agency regulated fishing and what the responsibilities of that agency were. Generally the group felt that the agency should be involved in environmental issues and law enforcement. Inactive anglers seemed to be somewhat concerned about environmental issues, especially contaminants which they could ingest through fish. The group seemed generally concerned with environmental issues and felt the state was responsible for cleaning up polluted areas.

There's a book the Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission gives out when you get a license. There are different pocket books you can buy. The Miami Herald puts out a

really nice book, colored pictures and details about the fish, the size, bag limits and everything.

(The state agency) gets your money for licenses, they check poaching, hunting out of season, manatee protection, environmental. I don't think they get the money, I think it goes to the state and they get whatever is budgeted for them.

Lake Tarpon puts some sort of a chemical in the water to get rid of hydrilla. That bothers me when my husband brings something home from there. I won't eat it.

We (will) not eat the fish where we live. There are insecticides, pesticides that you put on your lawn that spills into the lake; you don't want to eat this. All the plant life, algae, etc. They should have some kind of public access where people can go. You don't want to go fishing because you don't know what you're getting out of the water.

I think (the state agency) provides a good service and they are out there trying to protect the environment, and trying to make us all safer by stopping those who are breaking the law... What would it be like if they weren't there?

Site IV • Richmond, Virginia
April 13, 1994

Transcription: Active Anglers

Demographic Characteristics

African-American, male moderator

3 African-American females

5 African-American males

- Q.** How about everyone introduce themselves. Tell us a little about yourself. Maybe your age, but I'm primarily concerned about something like your family composition, married, single, what you do for a living and some of things you actually do for recreation. How is that?

That's fine. My name is Debra. I've been married a year in May. I'm a native born of Gloucester County, that's about an hour east of here. I'm the 6th child of 8 children, 6 boys and 2 girls. I have only been married a year. And last but not least, I work at a dry cleaners.

Well, I am Charles. I'm 45, married, with 2 children who are 18 and 12. I have been married for 13-14 years, something like that. I'm into draperies. I have a business in draperies, then work part-time driving. I like fishing, and sports like football, baseball, basketball.

Oh, I like fishing, bowling, I love bowling, crocheting. I do a lot of crocheting. And that's about it.

My name is Al, I'm married, there are 2 in my household. My wife, she likes to fish a lot. I'm a retailer. I have a

record shop. We fish saltwater and freshwater, we like to do both. We prefer saltwater fishing. I live in Highland Park.

Hi, I'm Debbie. I'm from Southside. I have been married 4 years, I have a 4-year old son. I fish mostly near Yorktown. I do private nursing in private homes. I like softball, fishing, anything outside, I like it.

Hi, I'm Debra and I'm from Charles City. And I work for the Department of Social Services in Richmond as a benefits programs specialist. And I like football, I'm a Dallas Cowboys fan. Extreme. I only fish because my daughter likes to fish. She is 12. I have one child, she's 12 so I've taken her fishing since she was 2 years old. Her uncle started her. And she propped up on the boat beside him and caught the biggest catfish I have ever heard of.

I'm Forrest and I'm 50 years old. I'm from Richmond. I live in Techwood Village. Freshwater and saltwater fishing; hobbies are chess, peanuckle, boating. I'm very active in my church, I'm a Deacon in my church. Just one child still living with me, but he is away at college, he is 19. I raised 3 boys: 19, 25, and 30.

My name is Thomas. I'm a widower, aged 75. I am not pulling your leg. I started off fishing with my uncle, used to walk for 2 miles up a creek when I was a child. My son and my brother got married. My son-in-law went deep sea fishing, caught a big dolphin, 125 lbs. Took him about 15 minutes to get him in, but he was worth the work. I'm retired. I like to garden.

I'm Walter and I live in the north side of Richmond. I've been fishing for the last 30 years. I'm 73 years old. I have 2 children, 2 daughters, 7 grandchildren and I've been retired 11 years. I'm working part-time now, 3 days a week, so fishing is my main hobby, and gardening. I just can't wait until the season gets in so I can put some seeds in the ground. That's it. But, like I said as far as...is concerned, the fishing is strictly saltwater. Well, as a kid, I use to see pictures of people fishing on the street and

there was a snake coming up beside them.... That stayed in my mind.

- Q. Tell me something, do each of you ever have a license, a fishing license?

I do.

Senior citizens are not required to get...last year was the first year that saltwater fishing in Virginia required a license, but by being 73, I'm not required to have a license.

Kids don't have to have licenses either — what is it, 12 years?

Is it 12 years - 16 and over?

16, I think it is 16...

- Q. So what is it, 16? You need to have a license at 16?

Agreed.

Right, 16.

A hundred dollar, lifetime license.

- Q. What makes you eligible for a lifetime license?

Well my age and all.

I got it back in 1984.

- Q. Now did you have to pay for that?

No, free.

- Q. You got it for free.

...again inland fishing.

- Q. O.K. You have a fishing license.

No not yet, I thought you had to pay for it. No, uh-uh...

- Q. You said you do or you don't?

I don't. Not yet.

- Q. Did you have one last year?

Yes. I have a state license.

- Q. What's the difference between a state license and a...
I don't know, I am not sure, I can't really remember.
With a state license you can fish all over the state but I just fish in Charles City. Since I am so close to New Canon Hill... I can go ahead and get a state license.
Because she likes to go everywhere.
- Q. So you need to have...What is it - you have a saltwater and one for freshwater. How much do they cost?
\$12.50 and one is 7.50, so it is \$20 bucks all together.
- Q. 20 bucks all together. Okay, now Debra was saying that there is a state license and also a local one.
No. I think what Debra is talking about is if you are fishing on freshwater and it is on government private property you have to go get a license. Like if I went to Louise Reservoir, I'd have to go to Louise to get a license if I wanted to fish on that particular reservoir and you can't use it but that one day.
Yes.
That's different then. Go ahead then.
I went to the...I bought it at the...at the fishing place, and he said I had to have it ordered because I lived in Charles City. In order to fish again, I had to pay to get a state license. So that's why I bought it.
Well, that is in the State of Virginia, not all of the states.
Yeah.
That's for freshwater.
- Q. Jackie, what do you have?
Right now, I don't have anything for '94, but I usually get freshwater and saltwater.
- Q. And saltwater. How long have you been doing this?
About 4 years.
Saltwater? Just started last year we went out on the boat.
The guy who owns the boat...

- Q. Is that an ocean-going boat or is that saltwater?

And I was also on Button Point Monroe in Hampton. They have a pier there that you can pay to go out on and you don't have to have a license at all.

- Q. What are the different types of fishing you do? Do you go saltwater and fresh?

(Saltwater and fresh, saltwater and fresh, saltwater and fresh, fresh only).

Daddy wouldn't take me on the boat because I would tell him I want to come back when I get sick, because I'm going to get sick, I get ocean sickness and I want to come back! ...even on the private boats they won't bring me -- my cousins won't bring me back.

Both.

- Q. Both. And Tommy you said both. And Morton you're older - only saltwater. When do you know when to fish saltwater vs. freshwater for those of you who do both.

It just depends on what you like to do.

If I get up in the morning and I just want to go down and fish for awhile, I might go down -- first of all, go down to James River somewhere.

But if I feel like getting in my car and taking an hour ride then I go down -- for saltwater.

- Q. So then, is it a matter of mood or the amount of time that you have?

The time for me.

If I have a whole day and if I know that the boat is available - - somebody could ride with me. I'll drive to...But if I just have a...hey, just for the day and I know everybody is working, I'll go saltwater, freshwater is closer to me. It all depends on the time I have.

So you can get to the James River in less than 10-15 minutes. To get to saltwater it takes a good hour.

- Q. Do you go by yourself? Do you go with friends, what?
*I go mostly with family members, always family.
Most of the time...I even went so far last year as to rent an
apartment there on the beach and I just stayed for 3 days.*
- Q. So you came down for 3 nights? Is it important that you have
anybody with you?
*It's more fun. It's a lot more fun.
I always like to have somebody with me for safety just in case
something happened there would be an extra person there.
Saltwater, you know you like to have someone with you.
You're out on a boat, you like to have someone with you.
On the pier you look to have fun, but if you go freshwater
and especially with a river, most of the time with
freshwater, you know if you go out I usually go out
sometimes 6 o'clock in the morning, I want to be by
myself. Because there is something peaceful about the
water, especially when you are on a river bend, not so
much like saltwater. You go out on a river bend and there
is something peaceful about it. Sometimes you want to be
by yourself, but then again sometime you...*
*You like to have someone to poke fun at.
Yeah, yeah!
You always have to have bets. Golden fish awards that we set
at the house are \$5 on the largest fish and the first fish in
the boat and you pay...*
*I don't mind paying for the largest fish, but darn that first
one...*
*Yeah. Well with the largest fish thing, you have a chance...I
know more about saltwater fish than...*
- Q. What type of equipment do you have? What type of...fishing
equipment?
*All I know is it's a fishing rod. My husband usually fixes it up
before we get started.*
- Q. In other words, is it a fishing rod, is it a rod and reel, okay.

Is that the only kind?

Yeah.

Closed face and open face (reels), meaning it's not closed in, the gears are open.

And the closed-end ones are the ones you screw the cap on and whatever you get, you can't see it.

Q. What kind of equipment do you have?

Opened face.

Q. Do you have... I was told about a cane pole. What is a cane pole?

Freshwater.

I have one, several of those. You use them in ponds.

You can use them anywhere, however the problem is your water is controlled, your water is not moving, except underground through a canal some kind of way.

Q. Things like fly fish. Have any of you ever heard of fly fishing?

That is freshwater. You see a lot of it...a lot of people do it differently. When we go saltwater fishing we like to fill the buckets up and give away all of them. But we just like to keep filling buckets up because I want to fill my buckets before he fills his buckets up. But when you freshwater fish, you don't freshwater fish for quantity, anybody who goes bass fishing wants to fish for that big bass. I don't care if it's only one.

So, it's not the quantity of it... it's just the thing of catching that certain fish.

Q. Why do you go fishing? What is it about fishing? Why do people fish?

I go to relax my mind, like when I'm really depressed. I get up and I'm ready to go. It just builds me up. I jump in the car, I gas up, I hit the highway and I'll be thinking, I can't wait to hit the water. And once I get to the water,

my mind just takes off and all problems, I leave them.

- Q. And you said sometimes you go with people and sometimes not. Would your favorite way of fishing would be with people or without?

I like to be with people, because I got a ... right on the boat, nobody sits there and I do my thing on one end and on the other end and they're doing theirs.

- Q. Are you fishing with the same people or different people?

Mostly the same group. There are 2 of us and we have 3 different boats we take out and sometime we take them all down. Two boats stay in Norfolk, Newport News and ...

- Q. What type of boats ...?

Two of them...sleeps 6 and the other one is just a small...open boat.

- Q. Debra, why fishing? There are so many other things that people could do.

Well, I have been fishing since I was a child. I really take my daughter out because she enjoys it. But it is very calming to sit at my cousins' ... they live on the creek here in Charles City and they have a house there and they have a chair sitting on the bank and you just sit there and throw the pole over and the fish come. It's calming, it really is.

- Q. So you...what will happen if you don't catch any fish?

Well I have to be in the mood. But I'm going to stay anyway, because Cameron, that's my daughter's name, wants to stay. So I'm going to stay anyway. But most of the time I'll be eating lunch. If the fish don't bite within an hour, I'm going to eat lunch. I'm going to sit there and wait with her because she will sit there. Because she is one of those people he was talking about earlier, that can sit there all day and throw that pole over and not catch anything. But Cameron is going to catch fish, regardless,

she is going to catch fish. I don't know why. My uncle and aunts who are old say you don't hold your mouth right.

I tell you one thing old Rusty can catch some fish.

Uncle Rusty yeah.

If nobody else can catch them, he can throw right down side somebody.

He holds his mouth right. That's what they say, you're not holding your mouth right.

Q. Why fish?

I come from a fishing family. My father has spent a lot of time on the river, but for me, as I have gotten older, it is a real challenge, especially with freshwater fishing. You have to know what you are doing with freshwater fish. With saltwater you can drop the line, bottom line, something is going to bite. But let's say you set out to catch a bass. You have to know about water temperature, where they are, habitat, if you are going to catch some. If you are going to go out there to try and try, you will be out there all day long.

You have to have the right tools.

The real challenge is when you use the artificial bait as opposed to live bait or cut bait, and like he was saying, if you could catch one bass in an 8 or 9 hour period, if it looks like that. It makes your day. Because you're going to take him home anyway. But that's not the problem, the problem is rock fish which is a type of bass. This is where the law is really enforced, not with small mouth bass, not with large mouth bass. They are not really pushing that though.

Q. You're saying that...describing how this fish that you caught....Is this a prize of some kind?

No question. That's why small mouth bass and wide mouth bass are mounted.

- Q. So when you catch this prize, what do you do with it?
Well in the state, if you go to a particular station, they look at it and they give you a citation you know and then you can have it taken to a taxidermist and mounted.
- Q. Most of your catch, what do you do with it?
*I eat it, eat it, can't wait to eat it.
I am a fishermen, but I'm allergic to fish. But I cook them...
I give some of my neighbors some. I gave one of my neighbors some. The last time somebody game me some they cleaned them for me. I said, I'll never give you nothing.*
- Q. So you fish because, Debra, you said it's relaxing, Charles you said you would rather be by yourself early in the morning. You fish because you can have stuff to put in the freezer. What are some of the other things you can get out of fishing?
Well it's really relaxing, I like getting up early in the morning. One night I went on to Pritchard Creek on the eastern shore. We stayed around all night, slept down there and the most beautiful thing I've ever seen was the sun coming up.
- Q. By yourself or ...
With my son-in-law.
- Q. How important was it that you had your son-in-law with you?
Well, he was a sticker...
- Q. Imagine, if you will, that for some reason fishing was forbidden, what would you do? What would you do if they banned fishing?
Find something else to do. I wouldn't drink liquor. I love boating, I have my third boat now, boats that I trail into the water. I have my small boat, if I did not have anybody to go with me, I could go by myself. Go down in the

rapids. Go cross the river, anchor, if I don't catch fish... and it is so peaceful out there in the water, you don't hear anything, maybe way off somewhere somebody is in the woods or people working with tractors. You might hear something like that once in awhile. But it is very relaxing. And water is something that, before I started the boating, I love swimming. So I got attached to water like that. Then by seeing various periodicals about fishing and what not, that's something else that baits you into it, you see, so I start the fishing, saltwater. Like I told you in the beginning, freshwater was not my thing because of the...

Well I would like to do freshwater now that I have a boat... maybe go up there and do some freshwater fishing. Well, like Tom said, I wouldn't drink liquor. I probably still would go on the water like everyone agreed, it is so peaceful just sitting there... I was born around the water. So that wouldn't stop me.

Well see it is not fishing, you name it fishing. It's getting out with good people and the people that you are around are the people that you know that you trust, basically. You're on a boat together and sitting there, I don't care if I put the reel in the water or not. I think the thing that everybody wants to say about the water is that the spirit of God comes across the face of the water. And regardless of whether you are catching fish or not, just as long as you are there.

It is called fellowship.

- Q. Fellowship, interesting. When you think back about your youth or when you were introduced to fishing, what do you remember most vividly or most interestingly about fishing?

What I remember the most is how my grandpa used to throw bails in the back of the truck - get in the back of the truck and sit us up in the close part of the truck and we had clothes, holey clothes and grandma had her big straw hat on. And all of us were going and they would teach you how to just sit beside the bank, and not move - not move

because if you make all that noise the fish won't bite, just family things they took time with us - showed us different things about the water - which to cross -everybody walk, like you have to walk by the plank - look in the water, can you see the bottom before you cross over. Just simple little things.

- Q.** What do you guys remember as your introduction to fishing?
I think the most amazing thing that I can think of is just the idea that I'm going to catch something and that I'm going to eat it. It is just like a garden. You're going to plant your seeds and they are going to germinate - it is going to grow. You actually grew and caught your own food. It means basically you can survive without grocery stores.

- Q.** Would you feel the same way about hunting?
I've gone hunting, but I've never had a real love for killing things. And this is one of the reasons I don't fish for sport, I fish for food. Everything I catch, I keep. If I don't keep it, I give it away. But there is no such thing as just catching a fish and throwing it on the side and letting it die. And so I had this experience and went out killing one day, I shot a -I think it was a sparrow with a shot gun, because there was nothing else...there was nothing else to shoot at that day--that particular day. I was going to shoot at something anyway. But anyway, he was up in the tree, I took the shot gun and I just aimed it and pow! Feathers just went everywhere, right, and I have not been hunting since and that's been over 20 years. I am not in the habit of just killing something, just to kill it.

I don't care for it.

No, neither do I.

I really love to hunt, but in my lifetime and the neighborhood that I grew up in, when I was a kid, I used to look at guys they used to call hungry hunters. They would walk on the...you see so there is plenty of game...

Guy would walk out -- you would be standing here, he would

take a shotgun and blast right down at your foot, see. Because he is what you call a hungry, a hungry hunter, see. So that is something that is still in my mind - I never wanted to go. I love the woods, I can walk in the woods in the summertime and look at the birds and the bees or what have you. When I was a kid, I used to go feed the blackbirds you know, I just love that life, you see. But when it comes time for hunting season, forget it, but fishing, yes I love it, see. And it is just like you said, I love to eat fish. And my kids, Diane and myself, we catch fish. We travel 90 something miles to go fishing. I clean them, freeze them in water. I'm eating fish now...

- Q. Do you fish because it is food or do you fish because it is recreation? and you get food?

Both.

- Q. Which is the bigger issue?

Recreation.

When you pull your line out...he bites the hook...you set the hook...he comes out of the water, he gives you a show. You feel thrilled you got it.

- Q. What other activity would give you this thrill?

Chess does the same thing for me, a big softball game...

- Q. Yeah! I was going to come back here, remember you said you were playing chess and you were talking about the strategy and what not -- besides holding your mouth open -- what else is there about fishing that you can really get a thrill out of?

Well, like he said -- I like it when the fish bite. I like that feeling when I can pull him up, you know, and take him off -- the fish is there! I like that.

- Q. What else is that like? What could you equate that with? What else in your life gives you that type of sensation?

Well, I played basketball for Virginia State and you win a game...the winning part.

The thrill...the thrill is to land the fish. It's not...you don't just...I mean like you say...or even the fish that you really want to bring in anyway, you know, but when you hook a fish and that's the fish that you wanted and you see him you can still...once you have the fish, if you're on a pier, you have to get him from the water to you. You'll have a lot of problems if he comes up from under the water and does things all his way. You have to bring him in. The same thing about freshwater fishing. If you get that fish to the boat and inside, you get a real good feeling.

- Q. Good feeling. Michael, what else would give you that real good feeling?

Let's see. I would say when I was playing football.

- Q. What part of football?

Winning...

The winning...playing tennis...the winning.

In my case the thrill...the next thrill is smoking. It was for me. You get the same thrill. You can be hungry, you can be lonesome, that cigarette will calm you. Thank goodness, I gave it up. After smoking for 40 something years.

- Q. What are some of the problems? All fishing, fisher-people, fisher-ladies, fishermen, anglers, whatever.

Well the worse problem you can have is with the head. If somebody says they don't want to catch any fish, they just want to walk fine and drink beer.

That's the thing with me. You think you have a fish, and you cross somebody else, you're just reeling and reeling. I just hate...and their dangling and everything on top of your lines and that's not so good.

- Q. So why do you go back there?

I guess to just go catch that fish.

- Q. Some of you started talking about some of the restrictions. What about some of the restrictions? Are there restrictions on what you can catch and what you can fish?

Size.

Well, flounder for commercial fishing is 13 inches, for recreational fishing it's 14 inches. Catch anything below that and if the game warden catches you, he'll write you this ticket, take your fish and put it in the little freezer on the back of the truck and it is the start of a legal process because of a fish.

Some of them are very expensive too. Some fines are up to a \$1000.

\$500 for a rock.

A rock fish which is out of season. They are not in season now.

- Q. What do you think of some of these regulations? Are they fair or not?

Well, they are not fair.

- Q. What are some of the reasons why they are not fair?

Commercial fishermen can load his net up, he can get tons of fish. And it is not fair. Yeah, using a net. We're out there with the lines, the hook, line sinker. And they have to be over 6 inches. Yeah, a certain size.

And then they have trout farms right up here. I go to...it's right up in there. This man raises trout...one of them is basic regulation. But you can go there and pay him to fish, and his little mate, and you catch as many as you want regardless of the size, in fact he tells you that you are going to keep every one of the ones you catch - because he charges you by the pound. And you can't throw anything back, because if you come out and you go somewhere and catch a trout that's under-size, then you get convicted for it. I think the law conflicts with the sport

of it. I understand it's a business to the law enforcement.

Q. *Where does the business come in?*

You have to pay for your fishing license. You're charged every time you get a ticket.

It's a lot of money.

Everytime a person gets a ticket for fishing improperly, that money goes into... I've seen some go to James River rock fishing who caught a rock, and if you are not educated enough to know that these fish are illegal fish, you don't know you are a half-inch short, or an inch short, or under the weight or under length whatever. You come out of the water, there is a game warden standing there looking into your bucket with a tape measure or a scale. Then because you are under the size you lose your truck, you lose your reel and you get a \$500 fine and you are out there to catch a fish. Everybody knows what a striped bass looks like. I remember that one time it was called a striped bass - you call striped bass, you call them rock. And if you don't get a book and educate yourself before you go on the water - I come out...I usually keep what I put in my catch. If I come out there with a striped bass and somebody standing up there tells me, "well this is a rock fish, \$500 fine, and if you have any in your car I'm going to take your car" - I mean you've got a problem there. In Gainesville, they were taking peoples' boats, their trailers and their...

I didn't know they take your vehicle.

You get your vehicle back. They don't take you away, but your vehicle and everything else.

Q. *What could they do to solve that problem?*

I think what you're doing now, you -- we're talking to someone who doesn't know anything about fishing. We're not talking to the right people, but if we get together like this as fishermen and as people that want the laws changed, you got to speak up for it.

- Q. What would you recommend to whomever controls these - who makes these laws. What would you tell them?

Take surveys. Not change anything, take surveys and let the public decide, this is supposed to be a democratic system, we don't vote for these laws, they give them to us.

- Q. How do you fix the issue of catching the wrong fish of the wrong size, what could they do to avoid you losing your trout, getting fines and all of those other things?

They can do like hunting. They have a season for doe, deer hunting, they have a season for buck. And it doesn't matter how small the buck is or how many points he's got on his head you can eat him. So they need to have that. Then they have a doe season where you can shoot does, then they stop the season.

- Q. So what you're saying is they should do the same thing for fish?

You see when you put a line in the water, you have no idea what's going to come up. You don't want no...

- Q. What should happen in a situation like this? You say you don't want to throw them back because you think he is already destroyed, and you hooked him, but you didn't select which one to hook, right?

You should be able to keep that fish.

Because if you throw it away it's just going to die.

Yeah, but the law is the law, you just have to do it. When you know it, because like I say there are some people who just don't know it.

But in some cases when you catch a bass, you use a little...some times it got 3 or 4 hooks on it. Sometimes when those fish want to get hook...a treble hook may cause somewhat of a problem, but a single hook, eventually they will work their way out.

I say the same thing, you are taking a chance with the fish. If I hook it regardless of what it is -- if it was out of

season then I could understand – but if I'm fishing and I hook this fish – if it is season – then I don't care if it is a rock, bass or whatever. I am going to put him in my bucket and usually take the chance of getting to the car with him. Because at one time, even now, you fish for sport. But freshwater fishing, I know when I was young, I just wanted to eat it. You didn't want to bring back a bass because he was 2 inches short.

- Q.** Well, how do you deal with the season issue? Because you know you were saying you can catch a fish that was out of season...

The same way they do for hunting.

- Q.** But what happens if...but I mean you don't select the fish that is going to bite on your line.

But you know what's running. Say like for instance... the perch are coming up... Then after the perch, the shad come in the water, then the herring, then because of the weather change, the water is going to get warmer, you're going to see the bass, then the crab meat. But getting back to the real thing about regulations and law. The State of Virginia's position is there is no (excuse for) ignorance of the law. If you have a valid fishing license, you're supposed to know about the law, because there is a book available – they give you a booklet with the license.

And it is free!

All the perpetrators probably get away with catching fish out to sea. But it does ask you how long have you been fishing...10 years, 20 years...so you look at the age of the person, the experience of the person. See like this gentlemen here, there's no way he could tell you he didn't know better.

- Q.** What are some of the other problems? Things that annoy you, bother you about the whole fishing situation?

I have a good one. The best fishing spots are on private property or commercial property. You need a second license, like Debra was saying – you need a license to fish on property. ...Charles City, these people own lots of land with beautiful lakes and they are controlling the best fishing. Going to somebody's pond is you know 5 acres you know wide, angler fishing.

- Q. So what recommendations would you make to...who governs, who controls the fishing?

The Department of Inland Fishing right over there on Broad Street.

But they don't control private property.

- Q. Who controls the whole fishing...What should the agency do to solve that problem?

I don't know if there is anything that they can really do about it, because it's actually owned by individuals or a company.

- Q. But how could they compete or allow you to compete or give you access to that same quality of fishing?

I don't think they're...

Well in Charles City they have a national fish hatchery ...the same kind of fish there are in that little hole...

You can't stop, see I'm thinking, private property, see they can stop you from outside-in, but they can't stop you from inside-out. If you go to a certain boat landing and go back and fish from the lake...there is nothing they can do about it.

See but the difference is that you have a boat.

- Q. Is it fair that you should have control over who fishes on their dock?

Yeah!

Yeah because some when they go on private property they throw trash, tear down things fences, gates and stuff like

that. Folks don't respect people's property, so that's why they have it private, to keep you off.

But I think since they don't own the water though there, there should be some type of access to the water not going to so much property -- but when we talk about property -- we talk about somebody's house might be right here, but the entrance could be miles from the house or a couple of miles from the house -- but what they are saying is all the property and so there is no access for you to get in, even with a boat.

Right, but you have to find your boat landing. If I own 50 acres of property and I did not want public fishing there, I wouldn't put a boat landing there. And if I did, I could charge you. Because this is a lake, and somewhere on that lake is land. If I have to drive 5-10 miles up to that place where I want to fish, fine. But if they tell me, "No, I don't want traffic coming through here," you have to agree with them if they own the land -- even though they don't own the water -- it stops.

Q. Should the government or agencies who give you these licenses -- should they have these types of special rights?

But they do.

It is like I was telling you - they do - in Charles City they have the fish tank, where they breed fish and they put them in the lake. You fish up there?

But that is not real fishing.

Q. Why not?

It's got like 185 acres.

Look at this realistically. First of all, God put the earth here. He put the land here, he put the water here, he put the fish here. And they command...that they are going to start charging for what God has given us free. Now you know there can't be anything fair about that.

Q. How about the fact that you have to pay for a license? Is it

worth it?

Yes.

They just went up. What, at least 2 or 3 years ago. It used to be \$7.

Q. How much is it now?

I don't know.

You didn't have to buy a saltwater license. You could go saltwater; fishing for free.

If you had a boat you could just go. Just take your bait and what you spent that morning.

As soon as you get to Newport News or Hampton near saltwater, you have to have a license...anywhere you saw saltwater on Main Street just pull your car over.

Q. When did they make the change?

Last year.

How do you feel about that change? You say last year.

For saltwater fishing, I think it is ridiculous.

I think it is ridiculous, I'll tell you why. For people who don't have boats, most people don't have boats, when they go places like...they like to catch some fish. Now the commercial fishermen have the nets strung all the way across where the fish can't even get to the people at the pier. See they shouldn't allow those people to have those nets strung like that. I mean you got the whole ocean out there.

Not only those commercial fishermen, a lot of them are foreigners. They are not even from this country. And I'm talking about right down here in the Atlantic Ocean, right off the bay.

Q. You said you spend what, \$20 on a license? Right? What happens down the line? Where does that \$20 go?

The understanding I have is some of it is used to keep the Chesapeake Bay clean. Just to maintain the areas along the shore line.

Well, they say it is to clean up the Bay. That's also what I heard, to clean up the Bay. I guess it is used to put it back into the business. To pay the game warden's salary.

- Q. Do you think those monies are appropriated properly or are they misapplied? Do they go into something other than your own pleasure?

No money is used properly. I don't see the difference now than I saw 10 years ago.

I think it is a shame to put a price on saltwater, because of the public -- I mean the ocean is free to everybody.

- Q. But what about the lakes and what about the streams?

Well the lakes and the streams, that is different, you aren't going to clean that up anyway, I mean...

Now saltwater fishing, well salt purifies anything itself promptly.

Well we fishermen use rods and reels as sports fishermen, right. We don't do any damage really to saltwater or freshwater. We can't catch enough fish. The fish that are caught by commercial fishermen netting the fish. We probably don't get our money's worth for the license that we purchase. We could catch a hundred fish everyday for the rest of our lives and thousands, millions of people and you could not hurt the ocean, because the ocean is hurt when you go out there with the huge net.

- Q. Where do you get your information about what happens to the fishing agencies or what the game wardens are doing? By the way -- what do you call these people who are out there?

Game wardens.

- Q. Where do you get your information about what is going on?

Usually, they inform you when they make a law.

I think you can get a publication. Because they make a publication about everything.

But you have to request it. That is not information that comes

to you.

When we get the information, there has been some type of infraction, some law has been broken and this person is put on the 6 o'clock news.

- Q. Walter, you mentioned something about a periodical that you read?

About the rock fish. When I first started fishing in 1950.

Rock fish were around then, I did not know how to catch rock fish. There was a certain kind of way that they had to rig up for it. Once in awhile you could luck up on it. They were over-fished. And they just left Virginia waters. Now they've started to come back again. In certain rivers they are plentiful.

They charge \$500 a piece selling them...

I've never been freshwater fishing. Now the state has the fisheries, where they grow fish and they put them in public streams, most of them in the western part of the states. Was it last week when they had the open trout fish... but a lot of people could not get to it because there was a lot of snow. And people want to take their kids up there fishing. And they do it every year. Thousands of people go up there... they have fish legal size.

That is not fishing though. I don't know what that is.

- Q. What other complaints do you have about fishing?

Only complaints, I think, come in the way they enforce the laws on fishermen. As for fishermen, I don't have any complaints about fishermen. I pay for the license to help keep the county going. I know the game warden has to be paid, so that doesn't bother me too much. But when they stuck that saltwater license on me...

- Q. Problems? Anything you wish would be changed -- done differently?

I agree with the saltwater fishing. Like I said, it is ridiculous -- you want to go on the pier fishing and not have to worry

about anyone coming along taking your bucket.

- Q. Is it okay if they check your bucket for freshwater fishing?
*No, but there is nothing you can do about it.
Probably so.*

- Q. What is the proper way to deal with this problem? Catching the wrong fish at the wrong time, so you won't have these \$500 fines.

The reason they have that, that you can't catch the fish in season, is because they are growing the fish -- you know what I'm saying. If you take all the fish of one kind then you won't have anymore. So they have the seasons so they can spare them and breed them. That is the reason they have seasons.

Even with the laws of \$500 a fish -- I know guys that come around my house everyday...everyday somebody comes around my house, blackfish...

- Q. Is there an opening day for fishing?
No, you fish year round

- Q. Do you ever run into a crowd situation... are there times when you drive however many miles and you get there and you say oh gosh everybody is out here -- everybody has beat me to the good spot -- have you ever had those problems?

Oh yes. You just go to another spot.

- Q. Do you ever run out of good spots?
*Anytime a spot can become a bad spot -- you know.
You just go to the next spot.*

You can go to a spot and be there by yourself and all of a sudden the fish will start biting.

- Q. What about how far you have to go?
I will pack food, whatever.

The good part I found out about is coming home, because

everybody sees each other. You go fishing where you want and all of sudden here comes Sunday, you have to go home. That is the longest ride you have coming back home.

Because you don't want to stop fishing. You don't want to leave from that mini-vacation thing, all of a sudden you have to come back to reality -- go back to work or whatever.

That is a horrible feeling.

Everybody is quiet.

- Q. What is the likelihood of you giving up fishing and just going on to another activity?

As long as I have Cameron, no. As long as I am into saltwater fishing, but if I go to freshwater fishing and be like Cameron and run into a snake, that's going to take care of me.

The snake is as scared of you as you are of him. If they don't bother me, I'm not going to bother them.

Something else, there are no age gaps for fishermen. You meet the most interesting people. People who are on the water have a different mentality than people who are inland.

- Q. What is the difference?

I think people who are inland all the time have a lot of tension and people who are around water, whether they are young or old, have knowledge and relaxation.

It is a common bond between you and the person. You don't even know the person, but within 5 minutes you're going to know that person. You've got something in common.

- Q. Are these friendships just for that occasion or is this something that is carried on?

You get to know these people, you see these people all the time, before you know it you get to know these people by name. Then it is, "When do you come out?" You start

looking for them.

Then the younger fisherman goes out fishing and runs across the older fisherman -- there is always a good fisherman. And there is one more thing, you always ask "What do you do to catch a lot of fish?" No one really realizes. My uncle used to go fishing and he used to soak fish, he'd take the fresh fish and put it in a big tin and that would last you through the winter. It is delicious.

- Q. Does anybody still have to go to the grocery store to buy fish?

No.

Not really.

- Q. Do you know of any people who have stopped fishing, slowed down, are not fishing as much?

Yeah. Due to health.

There are other things -- you can start to play golf -- it won't be long before you start doing one over the other. You can become a fanatic over golf like you can fishing. It is whatever you spend your time doing. If you get enjoyment out of golf as opposed to fishing and the guys that you know always come around and say let's play golf, it won't be long before fishing...but you will go back.

- Q. What might affect your fishing behavior?

My health.

Health, yeah.

But last year it was funny...I met this man, he was paralyzed from the neck down, but he still liked to go out on the boat and they lifted him up and put him out on the boat and he stayed out all day. So when he came back they said he used to be the number one fisherman and he would put everything in his boat by himself and he had a stroke so they still take him and his friends were willing to take that time with him.

My aunt is blind so when she goes fishing I sit beside her and tell when she feels. I tell her, "Aunt Willie, it's under the

water, pull it up," and she pulls it up and takes the fish off and she sits in her chair.

- Q. What do you do as individuals to enhance the sport of fishing?
I take my little boy, he loves it.

Well, I try to take a bunch of people fishing and keep them from hanging around.

- Q. What can be done by you as individuals? Game and Inland Fisheries, what can they do to improve the sport of fishing?
Cut down on restrictions.

I don't see why they have a saltwater fishing license. I'm sure there is a rationale behind it. And like I said, have a season where everything you caught, you could keep.

- Q. If you caught an excess amount, you had a great day, what would you do with it?

Invite the neighbors to have a fish fry.

Well with all my cousins and stuff, even if they don't want the fish -- there is always people you can give it to. Like older people or people who are just having a bad time, you can just give it to them -- just give it to them.

They can organize tours you know, fishing trips, you know, outings that are not done by the state, but that would really promote fishing.

- Q. Would they charge a fee for this?

Sure, and people would pay with no problem.

Let's say you want to take about 10 people on Lake....that's bass fishing, demonstrating the art of bass fishing. It would be something unique because most people are fishermen by trial and error, never taught properly about fishing and about water temperature, about habitat for fish, season. This is why we get off in error a lot of times because we don't know the regulations, they could have classes -- those classes should be free, because they inform.

- Q. What do you think of this idea of classes?

They have them.

You can go anywhere and do whatever you want. The only way that that's fishing is with trial and error. I don't want you to show me how to catch a bass, that's your bass.

You can be not knowledgeable and trained.

But he holds his mouth right.

He's doing more than holding his mouth right.

What it will get you is that if I see you doing that, I turn around and do it...you see. That's what will get me.

So you're stealing knowledge, because you won't receive what you're stealing.

I think trial and error is the best thing about fishing.

- Q. So you're saying tours, fishing trips, classes. What are some other things that the game wardens could do in their agency that would make the sport more interesting?

First time offenses, when they come around and they see someone fishing and they see one fish in the bucket, they have to use some kind of judgement. This is not abuse of the sport. They should be able to give these people some type of citation and a warning, take their name as a warning and put it in the computer.

Last summer, we stopped through there one day to see if anybody was catching anything. There was a man in the morning when they first open the pier. There were a lot of people who were just kind of waiting and they opened the gate, then they rushed out on the pier to get their spot. This guy had a little girl and little boy with him. They had their little family. He set himself up, he threw the line in the water, then he gave the rod to the little girl. While he was fixing something else, the little girl caught a fish. It was a flounder. The game warden was sitting in his car in the parking lot with his binoculars. As soon as he took the fish off the hook, and was taking care of business trying to get the little boy set up, he takes the fish off for

the little girl to take it and throw it in the bucket. And as soon as that fish hit the bucket, the game warden went and destroyed his day. He measured his fish, wrapped it in plastic, took it to the little box on the back of his truck — I guess that's like a little freezer or something. They keep that for evidence, then they write you a citation for that fish.

- Q.** What would you have recommended to the game warden? What should he have done?

I probably would say, look at this man. Everybody talks about family values. This guy is out here early Sunday morning trying to fish with his kids. Hey, look the fish is too small, if it is living. If it is dead, there is no need in throwing it back.

Then that is a terrible thing, to watch them take you from the pier to his car while he bills you. That is ridiculous.

- Q.** What is the future of saltwater fishing?

The fishing for the public is pretty bad.

I think one of the reasons is because of the nets (commercial fishing).

- Q.** Do you only fish in one state or do you go to other states?

I used to go to other states.

North Carolina, Virginia, but not too often. You know if you're going shrimping or just down there fishing, I usually catch a party and go out there.

What you do is just rubber basin, get your captain all set up, get your motel set up, we just go out on Friday evening, and fish all day Saturday and come back early Sunday morning.

- Q.** Could or should the fishing authorities become involved...

You see lawmakers don't really care, because they are not fishermen, they are lawmakers.

- Q. So you say the game warden is really not a fishermen?
*He is not a fishermen, he is a police officer.
I know for a fact they give tickets, traffic tickets, whatever.*
- Q. What could the agency, for which he works, what could they do to make the whole fishing experience a better one?
One of our game wardens is a little more understanding, depends on who's with him. He is one of the few black game wardens and it depends on who's with him, if he has a whole bunch of...I can't help that I don't mind. I'm not going to mention his name because there are several of them. He warns some people but if his supervisor is with him, he has to write a ticket.
- Q. So the majority of game wardens are what?
White. Male. Rednecks.
- Q. Does that pose a problem for you as African-Americans?
*Yes. They are nasty and very rude. We were on a boat one time, one came and he was very rude...he was real nasty and rude.
As a public figure, you should never be rude to anybody, regardless what your position is.
He is doing the best that he can do.
But Charles, there is a way to do everything. You can approach a person in a better manner than, "Hey, what's that?"*
- Q. Do you think he or she spoke to you that way because of the racial difference, or was it just...
I can't speak for those game wardens...
- Q. But your experience?
*Yes.
You can't have a lot of lakes down there. There is a lot of territory to cover.
They have a lot of them.*

Some of them just abuse authority, I don't think it is a racial thing. Some people cannot handle authority.

Well, you know when it is coming from a person of another race, the first thing you equate it with is racial...

- Q. Let me turn it inside, are there special warrants, needs, expectations of the fishing industry, the fishing experience that are not being satisfied?

Not having the money available to us to have certain things.

- Q. Such as?

Most people don't have accommodations when they go to places where you fish. I know for a fact anytime you hit the tidewater area during the season and this is why...I went into this place and wanted to rent a room, \$9 a room. I come back a week later and I am the same person and they want to charge me \$25 a room. It just depends on who you're getting.

That is a very good point.

- Q. Is there anything that the Game and Inland Fisheries can do?
- No. You can't change something. See they give you this impression that this money is going to be used for certain things, but common sense will tell you...*

- Q. Are there particular problems that you think are related specifically to the African-American fishing experience that need to be addressed?

I wouldn't think so -- no more than the African-American experience in anything.

- Q. Can you dock your boat anywhere?

Certain places that blacks couldn't used to put boats.

You couldn't put your boat in Gordon Point and Prince George County, no, but now you can -- but they look at you real funny.

When the game warden or policemen, because that's what they

all are, when he walks up to you, I don't care if he is black, white, green or what, if he addresses you wrong, terribly or his attitude is terrible, well then he is doing that to get some attention from you -- a reaction. And if you react the way he wants you to react, then you just fell into his trap.

I tell you one thing that has really staggered the imagination. We really don't even know where the best fishing places are around here. Because if you think you do, find you one white friend that is an average fisherman and in this area right here, Richmond and surrounding areas, it will blow you out of the South.

Q. Why is it that you are less informed than...

Because we just don't have access, we don't own the parts of land...we just don't have it...

Q. Private property or public property?

Private, but some of it is not. They are just better fishing holes. They've been going there since they were children. And they are the only ones that can get on that particular land and go there and fish. And then you have people that will feed fish. If I'm laying on the water, I'm going to buy something that I know they like to eat, regardless of if I'm fishing or not to get them all to spool around that particular place. If you got 500 people down here fishing, and right up here less than a quarter of a mile away is private property and you know the people up there on the boat are catching this big fish, there's something that brought them up there. Either you running them there...

What really had flipped me out is when you think of the James River, we really think about 14th Street Bridge. But when you go above...and when you see these people's property, with boats tied up to their property, and you don't have any access to the river right there, it's mind boggling.

Q. Does the Virginia Game and Inland Fisheries have properties

or areas that they exclude or reserve for only special people?
They wouldn't say that. Probably, but they wouldn't say it.

- Q. As African-Americans, I hate to dwell on the racial thing, but I'll get off of it, are you being deprived in any way, based on something that the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries is doing?

None that I know of. I don't know, not in Charles City because like I said, we are the majority.

- Q. Are you covered by a different agency?

No, the same they are covered by.

They're still on reservation land.

But they don't have any water.

There is one thing that the government controls like the ones going out Hall Street. I think that the people that come fishing because it is public, open to the public. I think that the people that come there don't keep it stocked enough. I think that when you go to a lake now, I'm not talking real fishing, when you go to a lake...

- Q. Public or private lake?

Public. The ones that the government cut the roads so you can get to it... I don't think they can keep them stocked enough because of the people that fish there. You know when you go to a lake, bass, crab and all that stuff are in that lake and you take a half a day to catch a fish, regardless of if you are in a boat or wherever, there is something wrong with that lake -- either the fish are eating up the rest of them or whatever, or it is just not stocked enough.

It's closer to the city, closer to the city -- it is not being well stocked. The further off you go, the better stocked it is.

- Q. Does that show some kind of inequitable feeling?

No. Just as long we know where to get the boat.

But you know, if you had a place where you could take the

boat it wouldn't be a problem, but it's a saltwater boat. But the same way, you could have gotten small boats, too small for what maybe that one would be, a bass boat and something smaller, or whatever you see. I have a big cabin cruiser -- it don't do much good right now, but it is a cabin cruiser -- I could very easily re-do that, sell it and get 2 smaller boats, you see, if I wanted freshwater and saltwater.

We have the (well, we the family) they got the... boat with the awnings and all that stuff on it, yeah we got a couple of those. I don't know what you call it. All I know is we got stereos and everything on it.

- Q.** Are you aware of any information by the State, you know the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, that's of interest to us fisherwomen and fishermen?

Information of the size fish that you can catch or whatever. High tides and low tides.

It's nice to know what kind of fish are running in our area at what time.

What can you keep.

Posters down on these water fronts -- you know the size of fish you can keep.

Posted on the property itself. What the regulation is. They aren't posted anywhere like that.

Good places for accommodations, I guess -- where most people can go to take families.

- Q.** What are some of the ways they can get you some of the information about where you can fish, accommodations. How could they get that information to you?

Newspaper. They could put it on Mr. Moon, the last 15 minutes of his show.

You can have guides like fishing guide books, like they have in Colonial Williamsburg. They have guides to this and a guide to that.

Have you seen the inland fishing.

Yeah. I have seen that little colorful thing, they have pretty pictures on it.

Yeah. They have a good brochure but it is not sent up to you rather quickly like the Sunday Newspaper -- you have to go get it.

Q. And it is where?

Broad Street.

Or maybe in the place that you buy your license. They should have it right there, so they could pass it out when you get your license.

And the places where you buy bait.

Q. Where did you buy your license?

I bought mine right up here (at the agency).

City Hall.

Q. Is it just the license or do they have all the booklets?

Just the license.

Q. When you go into the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries, the agency on Broad Street, are there periodicals -- are there materials there?

Pamphlets. Booklets.

Q. Do you take them?

I take them.

Q. What's in there...

Rules and regulations about fishing and hunting, stuff like that -- different seasons.

Q. What do you say about that information -- good stuff or just a waste of paper?

Some of it is a waste of paper -- you have to sit there and read it.

Word of mouth is the best information.

Yeah.

And we have a lot of that. That's what I like.

By having pamphlets and booklets where the people buy the license. For first-time fishermen, that would be perfect for them. They could pick up a pamphlet and read the pamphlet to know what to expect. Instead of going out there... thinking you're having a good time and next thing you know you turn around and there is the game warden standing there.

- Q. Do children need a license?

No, for under 16.

The one thing we may have left out is the game warden may have a quota.

He does.

- Q. You talked about doing different types of fishing, fish from the bridges, fish from the shore, fish from the boat. Is there a preference?

Boat.

It depends.

- Q. If you don't own a boat, what is the alternative -- you rent boats?

Yeah, you can rent boats.

- Q. When you go fishing, do you ever take strangers? Neighbors' kids?

Well, all my neighbors are my kids.

Usually when I go fishing it is just me and my husband.

- Q. I want to come back to something that you said before about the difference in the experience between going with black people versus going with white people fishing. Is there a difference? Other than maybe getting accommodations for less. Are there other differences?

The difference is they know where the fish are. It is a

different world.

The only difference I find is that if I am going saltwater.

- Q. If you're going saltwater fishing, you rather go with black people. Why is that?

It is just like he said, if you go freshwater fishing with white people they can get you where you can...

It's just that they have access.

- Q. I'd like to say first of all this has been very interesting for me because I don't know a lot about fishing. Are there any other questions related to some of the issues about fishing here in Virginia?

When you get this information, do you get a chance to make suggestions to them?

Look deep into the law. Make sure that it benefits all people.

- Q. What are some examples where you feel the law has not been equally applied?

Well the aggressiveness on some occasions. Like he said about Monroe Pier, if you have somebody standing behind a rock peeping at you all the time and you are feeling that regardless of whether you are doing something wrong or not -- you're not paying attention to your children or what you're doing -- you're paying attention to whether or not he is going to walk up on you. While he opens your cooler scraping for a fish that is a half inch short.

So what you're saying is it needs to be simpler, like it was before, and don't worry about a whole bunch of stuff.

- Q. What is the likelihood of anybody really abusing the fishing laws?

Why do people abuse fishing laws?

- Q. If there was no game warden, what would you do differently?

I think if there were no restrictions, like with the rock fish, like there had to be restrictions so they can replenish.

Like if you had a season, a whole lot of folks would be excited to catch them out of season. It is the thrill of catching them out of season and getting away from the man.

Besides restrictions too, it's too much, it is a little too much. You know the thrill of it is you got that bass and you got away with it.

But the thing is if you caught a flounder chances are you aren't going keep it. You really want a chester flounder that is like that. You go fishing on a boat with a bunch of guys -- you're almost embarrassed to catch that little fish.

- Q. In the interest of time, and we don't want to delay you too much longer, and while we have Mark here, do you have any technical questions that you think he might be able to address?
The main thing is the size and the length that you could keep. Like I was saying earlier, for the first-time fishermen, and a lot of time I go out there and I don't know what to catch. I was lucky one time, it was on Monroe Pier and I'm going to tell you how the mood changed. We were standing beside a game warden, he had his family there, but nobody knew until his wife said well you can't keep that. I said, "Oh, how did you know that?" She said, "Oh, my husband is a game warden." You feel the mood (swing). It is the truth.

Most of the time it is no nonsense, you're guilty -- here is the summons, see you in court.

But that is because the law is written like that.

I don't think that if a man is catching a fish off his boat, he should not have to deal with restrictions.

- Q. So if you're on a boat, you should be allowed to...
That is not fair, you're supposed to have better laws on a boat.
I think any man who catches a fish 10 inch long, he ought to be able to keep it. But if they got 12, 16...

- Q. You all think it is more a matter of being complicated or not fair or not necessary?

All 3 of those.

A whole lot of people don't have a ruler, they don't even know what 10 inches is or 12 inches, all they want is the fish.

But why is it that you shouldn't keep the small fish, I mean if my son who is 12 years old is fishing out in saltwater -- regulation for freshwater I know will be different, but saltwater, like you say, there is no limit to the fish. I mean if he catches a spot and he feels as though he can clean that spot and eat that spot why can't he eat that? Why because of the fact that some law says that...?

- Q. Does everyone agree with that? It sounds like you do question the rationale behind the regulations, but also you want to be more informed about what you can and can't keep. What is the best way of getting that to you?

Well, naturally through the media. I don't think that there is anyone here that doesn't sometimes listen to the news or whatever. And again, I'm talking about myself, I'm not talking about anyone else, but I go here to Broad Street sometimes to get my fishing license. When I walk in I believe they have pamphlets from where you enter the door to where you get your fishing license that you can reach and grab. But I don't reach and grab them, but if when I pay that money for my fishing license if there was a teller right there that gave me the booklet that I needed, with the license -- there is no problem. The only big problem that I can make for myself is not read it. But they can't say that I didn't get that information...I gave the money for the fishing license. The rules are what I have to go by. So if they want to give you something, the thing that they should do is put the fishing license (in your hand and make you pay for the booklet).

I didn't realize how many women go fishing by themselves.

Moderator's Analysis

Background and Purpose

Over the past three years, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has sponsored research to explore the dynamics of fishing and hunting, to determine ways in which fish and wildlife agencies' services can be enhanced and ways to motivate increased involvement in these sports. As part of a thirteen-group qualitative study, the Service proposed to explore attitudes and behavior of African-American anglers in Virginia. The observed level of licensed anglers in this state appears to have reached a plateau. Thus, the objective of the research was to determine how the state should proceed to guard against a decline in the sport and ways to increase interest in fishing in Virginia waters.

Areas explored among this segment included:

- motivations for fishing
- perceived benefits of the various types of fishing (i.e., saltwater, freshwater, rivers, lakes, etc.)
- dynamics of the fishing experience overall
- to what extent the needs and expectations of anglers are being satisfied
- needed improvements/enhancements

Methodology

To achieve the objectives of the research, a focus group session was conducted among African-American anglers in Richmond, Virginia. The group was moderated by Paul A. Warner. The eight men and women who participated in the two-hour discussion were a mixture of saltwater and freshwater anglers (most participate in both types of fishing). In addition, all participants were screened to meet the following criteria:

- have or intend to purchase a fishing license in 1994 (for fresh or saltwater).
- freshwater anglers must have had a freshwater license for at least the past two years.

- must have been fishing at least four times during the past twelve months.

Respondents were also screened to exclude persons who:

- had ever participated in a focus group in the past.
- worked for, or had family members employed in the marketing research industry.

Group members were paid a gratuity of \$45 for their participation.

Caveat

As is the nature of focus group discussions, a limited number of respondents is included in the research, and the intent of the procedure is to stimulate group interaction and discussion. Thus, the information obtained in this focus group should be viewed solely as exploratory in nature. It should not be considered a measurement of attitudes and behavior of the consumer market overall. Rather, this research does serve to explore hypotheses and provide guidance for further research that utilizes a projectable sample.

Summary of Findings

Fishing History and Motivations

- All respondents either have or plan to purchase a 1994 fishing license for both fresh and saltwater.
- Most participate in saltwater fishing when they have the time to drive about an hour to the ocean (for a day trip or weekend). They usually make this trip with family or friends.
- Freshwater fishing may be planned or done on the spur of the moment, with fishing locations being available within a few minutes' drive.
- While most prefer to fish with family or friends, some also enjoy the peacefulness of fishing alone on inland rivers and streams (especially in the early morning).
- The motivations for fishing were agreed to be:
 - relaxation.
 - spending time with close friends and family members.

- the "thrill" of the catch: described as being similar to the excitement of "winning" in other types of sports.
- being able to eat what they catch (some have cookouts when the day's catch has been large or freeze fish that they will eat or share with neighbors).
- Most claimed that they plan to continue fishing as long as they are physically able to do so.

Problems Encountered When Fishing: Regulations

- The primary concerns among these anglers are compliance with the state's fishing regulations and having to deal with the game wardens -- particularly regarding keeping out of season or undersized fish.
- Most resent the threat of being punished for keeping undersized fish because:
 - sometimes they misjudge the size of their fish because they do not have a ruler with them.
 - they cannot control what is going to take the bait.
 - if a fish has been badly damaged by the hook, it will probably die even if they throw it back.
 - it is heartbreaking for their children to have to give up a catch regardless of its size.
- Game wardens were said to have ruined many fishing outings by hovering over the anglers or studying them through their binoculars the entire time they are fishing, waiting to pounce the moment they spot a violation. Furthermore, the wardens were described as having been:
 - unnecessarily "rude" and "nasty" when demanding to inspect their fish.
 - too quick to humiliate and fine anglers for minor violations (such as having a fish that is 1 inch too short).
- When asked what improvements could be made in the area of regulations and enforcement to make the fishing experience more enjoyable, suggestions included:
 - being able to keep any size fish that is in season.
 - or, if the size must be regulated, they believe wardens should not be so strict with the tape measure -- give

anglers a little leeway.

- put regulations literally "in their hands" at the time the licenses are being purchased.
- provide explanations about the regulations to help them understand the restrictions.

Other Problems/Concerns

- Other fishing concerns mentioned were related to the availability of good fishing locations:
 - many agreed that some lakes or sections of lakes are not accessible by public boat ramps and are surrounded by privately-owned property.
 - prime fishing locations are commercially owned and require a second fee to the regular fishing license.
 - state controlled lakes are not believed to be sufficiently stocked for the number of people who fish on them.
- There were not any complaints/concerns made about the availability of fish in the state's rivers. In fact, it was mentioned that fish are extremely plentiful in some sections during certain times of year.

Attitudes Toward Licenses

- Most did not have any complaints about having to purchase a freshwater fishing license and indicated that the money goes toward:
 - cleaning up the Chesapeake Bay
 - game warden salaries
 - restocking the fish
- However, most were not happy about the recently established saltwater fishing license and did not understand the purpose of the fee.

Information Sources

- Most receive information about fishing regulations, tide schedules and types of fish "currently running" from their local newspaper. This medium was agreed to be effective in reaching them with "fish facts." Some agreed that they would

also like to have more information available about accommodations close to the water for overnight trips.

Detailed Findings

Fishing History

Per survey screening requirements, all respondents purchase fishing licenses and either have, or intend to purchase, a license in 1994. The state agency governing fishing and licensing was said to be the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries. All appeared to be aware that different licenses are currently required for freshwater versus saltwater fishing and that the saltwater license is a recently established regulation (within the past year). The license fee was said to be \$10 to \$12 (about \$20 to obtain both). Some agreed that the saltwater license is waived if the angler is fishing from a personally-owned boat. In addition, it was mentioned that some piers offer fishing for a fee that includes the license cost for that day.

Most participants indicated that they fish in both fresh and saltwater. Most saltwater fishing excursions were said to take place when they:

- have the time to drive the hour or so required to get to the ocean (having an entire day or making a weekend trip) and
- are going fishing with friends and family.

Most agreed that they more often go fishing with family or friends rather than alone because the camaraderie makes the sport more fun: *"You have to have someone with you to bet on who will catch the first and largest fish."* If fishing alone, they are more likely to do so in freshwater rather than saltwater because:

- a trip to the ocean is longer, and therefore more likely to be a planned excursion with family or friends. Freshwater rivers or ponds, however, are only a few minutes drive from home.
- the "peacefulness" of early morning fishing in freshwater rivers and streams is appealing to several who enjoy going out alone.

When asked what types of fishing equipment they use, the men described various types of rods ("open-end" versus "close-faced"). The women did not indicate using any particular type of fishing equipment, and one stated that she simply uses a rod and reel purchased by her husband. None appeared to regularly use cane poles, and they agreed that this type of rod is not suited for much other than fishing in small ponds. Fly fishing did not seem to be practiced regularly among these anglers. One mentioned that he will fly fish occasionally when certain types of fish "are running."

Motivations for Fishing

The motivations for fishing consistently mentioned among these respondents were a combination of relaxation, recreation and camaraderie with friends or family, the thrill of the catch and being able to eat what they bring in:

Relaxation: fishing was said to relax the mind and uplift the spirit. The rejuvenation they receive from the activity comes not only from the sport itself, but from being on or by the water. When asked what they would do if the sport of fishing was suddenly "forbidden," most said that they would continue to go boating.

"I go to relax my mind... like when I'm very depressed, I get up and go. It just builds me up. I jump in the car, gas up and hit the road... once I get on that water my mind just takes off and I leave all my problems."

"It's being able to go out in the boat with friends. I don't care if I have the reel in the water or not."

Camaraderie: fishing outings, particularly when boating, were agreed to be occasions for spending quality time with family members and friends. It was mentioned by one respondent that the people you will spend a day on a boat with are generally your closest friends -- the people you trust the most. A couple of anglers described these times as being occasions for "fellowship."

The "thrill": most agreed that they get a thrill from feeling

the fish bite and reeling it in. A couple of the men indicated that this thrill is further enhanced when fishing for the more challenging catch, i.e., one large bass rather than simply catching a large quantity of smaller fish. It was said that having to develop a strategy including decisions about types of bait, correct water temperature, weather and even "how you hold your mouth," sweetens the excitement of catching "the" fish:

"It's the thrill. When you throw your line out to catch a bass. He bites the hook, you set the hook. Then he comes out of the water and gives you a show."

Several likened the thrill of catching a fish to the excitement they feel when "winning" in other types of sports events.

"...it's not just catching a fish . . . but it's when it's the fish you want, and you've got to bring him in to you. If you land a bass and you get that fish from the stump to the boat, it's a good feeling. Similar to when I was playing football and winning . . . it's the winning."

Food: all of these anglers eat the fish that they catch. On occasions when they bring home more than their families can eat for one meal, they either give some away, have a cookout with friends or freeze the fish for later. A couple of respondents said that they are still eating fish that they put in their freezers last summer. While providing food is not the primary reason for fishing when compared to the reasons listed above, being able to eat what they catch did appear to significantly enhance the thrill of the sport. This part of the experience was said to be similar to the satisfaction that comes from having a vegetable garden:

"Just the idea that I was going to catch something and then eat it. Just like a garden . . . I actually grew and caught my own food. Which means I can basically survive without grocery stores."

None of these anglers appeared to find hunting comparable to the experience they enjoy when fishing. Although they did not say it,

some implied that they are more sensitive to the fact that they are "killing" something when hunting. In addition, hunting was considered to be a far more dangerous sport (because of accidents) than fishing.

When asked how likely they might be to stop fishing in the future, most claimed that they plan to continue participating in the sport as long as they are physically able.

Problems Encountered When Fishing: Regulations

When asked to name problems they encounter when fishing, several annoyances were mentioned including crowded areas and not having access to prime "fishing holes" because of private property. However, the primary concerns among most were compliance with the state's fishing regulations and having to deal with game wardens. None seemed to have any problems with quantity restrictions. Rather, the biggest concern appeared to be the likelihood that they will catch a fish that is slightly undersized or out of season. While they understand the logic behind having seasons for certain types of fish, they did not appear to fully understand why they cannot keep small fish that are in season. Most seemed to resent the threat of being penalized for keeping an "illegal" catch, especially undersized fish, because:

- sometimes they are not aware that the fish is too small since they generally do not carry a ruler with them.
- they have no control over what is going to take the bait.
- even if they throw the fish back, it will probably have been destroyed by the hook, so they do not understand the rationale of not being able to take it home and eat it.
- when fishing with their children, it is heartbreaking to have to make them give up a catch.

Respondents agreed that nothing ruins a fishing outing quicker than game wardens who either stand close by or watch from a distance through binoculars while they are fishing. It was perceived the wardens are waiting to pounce the moment an undersized or out of season fish is placed in to the angler's buckets. These anglers told

stories of family fishing outings being spoiled by game wardens with "gestapo tactics" and attitudes:

- often rude, "nasty," "demanding" rather than "asking" to look in their buckets or coolers.
- a couple of the men have felt in the past as if the game warden was trying to provoke them to make the situation worse:

"When the game warden walks up to you and addresses you wrong, he is doing that to get a reaction from you... and if you react the way he wants you to then you just fell into his trap."

The typical game warden was described as:

- white
- male
- "redneck"

Several of these African Americans agreed that they sometimes feel race is a factor in the way they are treated by game wardens. However, it was also said that these "policemen" are simply on a "power trip" and that they probably abuse their authority with everyone -- black or white.

The fines for keeping undersized or out of season fish were perceived as quite stiff (sometimes \$500 or even \$1,000 for an out of season bass). Besides the fines, the humiliation of having to deal with the game warden in front of their families, often having fishing equipment confiscated, was thought to be excessive treatment for breaking a minor fishing regulation. A couple related that game wardens sometimes even confiscate vehicles, boats and trailers (although this was said to be temporary).

"If you are an inch or half an inch short, you come out of the water and here's the game warden looking in your bucket with a tape measure. And just because you are short you lose your truck, you lose your reel, plus a \$500 fine. And not everybody knows what a striped bass looks like. If you don't get a book and educate yourself before you go in the

water, you'll come out with a striped bass and here's somebody standing there saying this is a rock fish...\$500 fine and if you've got it in your car they're going to take your car."

"Last summer on the pier there was a man who had a little girl and boy. He set them up, threw the line in the water and gave the rod to the little girl. While she was fishing, he turned to do something else and she caught a flounder. The game warden was sitting over in his car with binoculars and as soon as he took the fish off the hook and put it in the bucket (and he's trying to get the little boy set up at the same time), the game warden went and destroyed his day... took the fish, wrapped it in plastic and put it in the freezer as evidence and wrote him a citation for the fish. Everybody's always talking about family values. This guy is out there on a Sunday morning trying to fish with his kids. If the kid catches it you can't throw it back. Come on."

One respondent admitted being confused over the state's strict regulations in public fishing areas while commercial fishing holes allow (and even require) anglers to keep everything they catch:

"I go to a lake where a man raises trout and you pay him to fish there. They are nearly all undersized but you can bring them out. He tells you that you are going to keep everything you catch because he charges you by the pound."

Suggestions for Improvements Regarding Regulations and Enforcement

When asked what could be improved in the area of regulations and enforcement to make the fishing experience more enjoyable, the following suggestions were offered:

- When a fish is in season, they should be allowed to keep it regardless of the size: most believe that having "seasons" for certain fish are necessary to keep them stocked (even though they are reluctant to throw them

back, especially if it is evident that the fish will die anyway). Respondents are even more reluctant to throw back an undersized fish.

- If size must be regulated, then game wardens should not be so strict, i.e., severely punishing for one fish that is an inch too short. It is suggested that game wardens should issue "warnings" for first time offenses, especially if there has been no "gross" violation.
- Provide information about fish that are in season and the sizes: at least some respondents are aware that information pamphlets are available where they purchase their fishing licenses. However, where rules and regulations are concerned, they feel that the person who hands them their license should put this information in their hands at the same time. It is also suggested that current information about in season fish and sizes should be prominently posted in public fishing areas.
- Pamphlets should explain the reasons behind these rules to help anglers understand why they are being required to return certain fish. Especially when saltwater fishing, anglers do not understand why restrictions are placed on them while commercial fishing boats and nets are causing significant damage. Besides catching gross amounts of fish, some believe that the large nets used by commercial fishing boats prevent fish from getting to the recreational fishing piers.

"Why can't we keep the small fish. If my son catches a small fish in salt water, why can't he keep it? There is no restriction on the number you can catch."

Other Problems/Concerns

Many discussed that it is unfair when lakes or large areas of lakes are inaccessible because of private lakeside property. While respondents understand that people have the right to own private property and docks, they did not feel that this should give them exclusive rights to the water. It is believed that prime fishing areas should have an occasional public ramp to allow nonresidents

to enter the water. Several also complained that some of the better fishing locations are commercially owned and that a second fee is required to use these locations in addition to their original licenses. However, they also believe that there is little, if anything, the state can do to control usage of private waterfront property.

There is the perception that the state-controlled lakes are not sufficiently stocked for the number of people who fish on them -- "there are so many people that fish there . . . when it takes half a day to catch a fish in a lake, there's something wrong." However, when state "fish hatcheries" were mentioned as good locations for catching fish, a couple of the men complained that fishing at a hatchery is not "real fishing".

There were not any complaints/concerns about the availability of fish in the state's rivers. Rather, it was mentioned that fish are extremely plentiful in some sections during certain times of year:

"...you can catch 20 fish at a time with a net . . . "

Attitudes toward Fishing Licenses

Most did not appear to have a problem with the requirement of having to purchase a license for freshwater fishing. However, most were a little upset about the recent saltwater license regulation, and did not understand the reasons for it.

"We are saltwater fishing with rods and reels and are not doing any damage at all... but the commercial fishermen are doing damage with their huge nets. "

When asked where they believe their license money goes, most agreed recent publicity has said that those funds are largely being used to clean up the Chesapeake Bay. Other perceived uses for this money included game warden salaries and restocking fish.

Information Sources

Currently, most receive the majority of their information about fishing from articles in the newspaper regarding:

- new rules and regulations

- what fish are currently running
- tide schedules

Some laughingly agreed that they sometimes learn about fishing regulations by seeing stories on the news about people who were caught breaking the law.

In addition to the above, some mentioned that they would be interested in obtaining information about overnight accommodations that are close to the water. The newspaper was considered a good means for communicating this type of information.

It was suggested that the state should put together group fishing excursions (with perhaps 10 participants) to instruct on the art of catching more challenging fish. One or two of the men indicated that fishing is a "process of trial and error." Therefore, there are no fixed rules that can be taught on how to catch "the big fish." However, the idea of having organized excursions available was generally reacted to positively.

Conclusions

- Overall, there did not appear to be any concerns significant enough to cause African American anglers represented in this group to stop fishing in Virginia waters. Although problems are encountered, they did not appear to be causing a decrease in interest or a movement toward fishing in neighboring states. Among this segment, the high levels of satisfaction and variety of pleasures that they receive from the sport appeared to outweigh the annoyances:
 - relaxation and rejuvenation of the spirit.
 - an opportunity to spend time with close friends, family and children.
 - the excitement and thrill of reeling in a fish.
 - the satisfaction of being able to eat what they have caught.
- The primary problem encountered by this group of anglers is

dealing with the state's regulations and the game wardens. All appeared to agree with the need to have seasons for certain species but they did not appear to understand the reasons for size restrictions on in-season fish. However, regardless of their level of understanding, virtually all have had problems complying with these regulations because:

- they misjudge size by not carrying a ruler in their fishing gear.
- sometimes they may be unaware of certain types of fish being out of season at the time.

4) Furthermore, even when they are aware that they have caught an illegal fish, they resent having to return it to the water because:

- they have no control over what they are going to reel in.
- if they are fortunate enough to reel in a much sought after, "big" fish (such as rock fish), it tears them apart to have to put it back because it is out of season.
- even if they throw the fish back, they believe it will probably die anyway. Therefore, they do not understand why they cannot take it home and eat it.
- when fishing with their children, it is difficult to make them give up a catch.

- Having to deal with regulations appeared to interfere with the relaxation and enjoyment of fishing, especially when the game warden is "standing over their shoulders." For all, this individual should be there to provide information, help them out or give warnings. Rather, they feel he acts like the police and once the fish goes in the bucket, there are no second chances. Therefore, the presence of a game warden constantly checking their buckets with a ruler or watching them through binoculars was said to be unnerving -- especially if they are fishing with young children and know that they will not even slightly bend the rules should they catch one that is not "legal."

- Among these African Americans, race was thought to somewhat influence the rough treatment they often receive from the predominantly white game wardens. However, most also believe that these individuals are rough on all anglers simply because of the power they have been given.
- There did not appear to be any major problems associated with finding good fishing spots because of crowds. If one location does not work out, they simply go to another. However, there were concerns about the availability of fish in public lakes and even on saltwater piers because:
 - they believe the lakes are not being stocked sufficiently (sometimes takes half a day to catch one fish).
 - commercial fishing boats, with their huge nets, are thought to be preventing fish from reaching saltwater fishing piers.
- The amount of fish available in the state's freshwater rivers was not thought to be a problem.
- The local newspaper was the form of media most often looked to for information about new fishing regulations, what types of fish are in season, tide information, etc.

Recommendations

- An effort should be made to aid compliance of fishing regulations by providing anglers with the necessary information. To insure that they receive this information, personnel in the licensing office and retailers of licenses should be encouraged to hand informational pamphlets to consumers with the license rather than simply placing the brochures in racks.
- To make information booklets interesting and helpful, it is recommended that new editions of the materials:
 - show inch markings along one edge, thus providing a ruler that can used to measure fish. It is recommended that at least 12" be provided. If tri- or quarter-folded pamphlets

are used, ruler markings along the width of the publication would provide ample room for measuring fish with a limit greater than one foot. This "ruler" could also highlight designated lengths for certain types of fish if they differ by species and their respective legal seasons.

- provide helpful hints and facts besides the rules and regulations
- For anglers who take their children fishing with them, an illustrated brochure showing various types of fish and offering a simple explanation for size and season requirements should be considered. Getting the kids involved in making sure they are keeping the "right fish", using the same type of "ruler" on the brochure, etc. may make compliance easier for parents, heighten interest in the sport among "future anglers" and provide a more enjoyable and memorable experience for all.
- Consider offering group fishing excursions -- either day or overnight trips -- providing information on fishing in general and tips on how to catch certain types of fish, compliance with regulations, safety information, etc.
- The information included in the section on "Motivations for Fishing" should be kept in mind when developing promotional campaigns/materials for fishing in Virginia.
- Additional ways to further provide information to anglers include:
 - local newspapers
 - newsletters sent through the mail (if possible, using a mailing list of licensed anglers)
- Explore additional options for game wardens in enforcing the state's size and season requirements such as giving warnings in certain situations. In addition, the manner in which wardens observe, approach and address anglers in the various situations should be dealt with through sensitivity training.

Section III •

Discussion & Conclusions

Discussion

Active and inactive anglers derive high fishing satisfactions levels by combining socialization values with naturalistic values. No other factors explain the critical elements in fishing recreation as completely. While it appears that naturalistic values are of greater importance in terms of proximal satisfactions, it is difficult to separate the two issues with any certainty.

I have a family now and I just watch my daughter playing with her pole. I look at it now like my parents looked at it when they watched my brother and me. (Fish, MT)

My kids get to see a lot of wildlife, bears and stuff. Lots of kids never get to see wildlife, never get out of town. (Fish, MT)

I fished a lot with my Dad when I was growing up and now I fish when I see my Dad. (X-Fish, WA)

There's a whole list of things, but getting out in nature in a nice place is probably the most important. (X-Fish, WA)

The next door neighbor took me freshwater fishing when I was about 23 or 24 and we've been friends ever since. (Fish, FL)

I take a couple of girlfriends after work and have a lot of fun... We may not even talk to each other for a half hour

or so. We just stand up there staring or thinking, or remembering different things. It's relaxing, we call it bonding. (Fish, FL)

I'm a real estate agent. It's pretty busy. I'm around buildings, houses, everything else. I'm around people. I get out there (fishing) and try to get to the most secluded spot. Just get out there in the trees. I go out with friends a lot of times if I can. (Fish, FL)

I'm married to a fisherman. My dad was a fisherman and my 2 brothers liked to fish and so when I got married I started fishing with my husband. Now I am the mother of a teenage daughter who doesn't drive yet, so my fishing days have kind of ended. (X-Fish, FL)

I lost my tackle box because (my husband) gave it to my son. I guess I'm out of the picture. My son is only 4. He keeps saying he wants to go fishing with dad. Hopefully I can send them both off fishing and I will get some peace and quiet. (However) I would not miss his first fishing experience. (X-Fish, FL)

I used to like fishing because my dad would take me and I would only catch the little ones, but I loved the experience of it. (X-Fish, FL)

Other factors of importance are the utilitarian value of catching fish and the skill of learning how to fish. These issues are, it should be emphasized, secondary to socialization and naturalistic values. These are not to be dismissed, but it is important to keep them in the proper perspective.

I don't know if it makes a difference in the amount of fish (I catch). (Fish, MT)

I'm looking for something to eat. I'm not a purist, catch and release, stuff like that. (X-Fish, WA)

Improving my fishing skills would be important. Just knowing that it would get easier. The more fishing I used to do, the more I knew about it. (X-Fish, WA)

Catching fish is important, but I'd only want to do it in a clean place. (X-Fish, WA)

Catching fish is really not important. I enjoy going to fish to fish. I have sat in the boat all day and caught nothing and have enjoyed it just as much as when I have caught a bunch of garbage fish or had some and lost them. I enjoy going out and sitting in a boat with my husband and fishing and being with him all day because that is our quiet time together. (Fish, FL)

I don't like going out unless I think I'm going to catch one. I prefer to catch fish. Going after the big one is fun. You can talk about it to your friends. (Fish, FL)

I would like to catch a big one... When that drag goes and it starts screaming, it has everyone up and down the pier seeing what is going on. It is an excellent feeling to catch a big fish, it makes a better story too... I would rather go and catch fish instead of just catching one big one. (Fish, FL)

I like to fish when the fish are biting. I like to catch fish. It's more fun for me to catch fish. I can't sit there all day long when nothing happens. I also like to cook the fish we catch and if we don't catch any, then I'll have to figure out something else to cook. (X-Fish, FL)

The costs associated with fishing rather than the cost of fishing licenses alone seems to be a negative value in angling. This is not to say that license fees can be arbitrarily raised as the issue of equity is quite salient in most areas.

Things cost so much now. (Fish, MT)

The cost of the license, that's nothing... it's just the nuisance and (the state agency)... make you feel put down, they treat you like a criminal. (Fish, MT)

I don't see that I'm getting anything out of (my license fee). (X-Fish, WA)

I'd weigh it out, (the cost of the license) might dissuade me. The main thing is (having someone to fish with). (X-Fish, WA)

I think if the fishing improves a little bit, people will (pay more)... I think that everybody who is serious about fishing

would pay a little bit more for their license. (Fish, FL)
A license? I think it's about \$15-\$18 now. You need a saltwater and a freshwater license. If you are on land you don't need a license, but if you are on a boat you need a fresh and saltwater license, because they will check. (X-Fish, FL)

The complexity of regulations and the issue of governmental regulation alone was a fairly major disvalue in most of the groups. Active and inactive anglers recognized the need for regulation and, for the most part, accepted it. However, they viewed the complexity of regulations and rigidity of enforcement as negative factors. They questioned the need for some regulations; they did not understand the underlying factors of the regulation or did not accept them as being valid.

(The state agency) should simplify the regulations. (Fish, MT)
The regulations have gotten so restrictive. (Fish, MT)
You have to have (the regulations) with you all the time and it changes so often... catch and release only, fly fish only. (Fish, MT)

If I went (fishing), I wouldn't know the rules. I wouldn't know if I could keep one. (X-Fish, WA)

The main thing that keeps me from fishing is knowing the rules, that and someone to fish with. (X-Fish, WA)

You have to carry a computer with you to figure out what you can keep. (Fish, FL)

(Regulation complexity would bother) a beginner, very possibly. But, after you fish a while, you usually become acquainted with the ones you are usually after. It's not that hard to grasp. (Fish, FL)

(I worry about regulations) a lot. I don't want to worry about whether or not I will get a ticket. That's one of the reasons I don't want to go fishing anymore. (X-Fish, FL)

"Last summer on the pier there was a man who had a little girl and boy. He set them up, threw the line in the water and gave the rod to the little girl. While she was fishing, he turned to do something else and she caught a flounder.

The game warden was sitting over in his car with binoculars and as soon as he took the fish off the hook and put it in the bucket (and he's trying to get the little boy set up at the same time), the game warden went and destroyed his day... took the fish, wrapped it in plastic and put it in the freezer as evidence and wrote him a citation for the fish. Everybody's always talking about family values. This guy is out there on a Sunday morning trying to fish with his kids. If the kid catches it you can't throw it back. Come on." (Fish, FL)

The issue of fishing access was not of great importance to the people in these focus groups so much as information about access. Most of the group members assumed or were aware of fishing access and opportunities in a general way. There was some interest in specific information from the state agencies about fishing access.

The (fishing) guides get first choice to float (the river)... the rest of us have to wait our turn and I don't think that's fair. It may be a right of those people to earn a living, but I have a right to enjoy the same thing. (Fish, MT)

In western Washington you can't step in a place without finding fishing. (X-Fish, WA)

I know it seems obvious, but I don't really know where to go. There's private property and all that and I don't know how to go about finding out. (X-Fish, WA)

Because of the difference between state agencies in this study and the nature of focus group interviews, it is difficult to make generalizations with any certainty. Generally, the individuals in the focus groups had either a neutral or positive view of the state agency. However, the actual level of factual information was very low even among active, avid anglers. Individuals do not have specific information about state agency functions. Their expectations, however, are that the state agency be primarily an environmental organization, rather than recreational. In nearly all of the groups there was a desire to see environmental protection

and enforcement. The overall impression of most people was that state wildlife agencies were doing a good job. Given the low level government is held in general, this is good news.

(The state agency) should clean up the pollution to clean up (Puget Sound). (X-Fish, WA)

I don't think it's (the agencies') job to say how to fish, it's their job to keep things in balance. (X-Fish, WA)

Is the state doing fish management or angler management? I think it has to be a little bit of both. The state needs to make sure there is a balance. (X-Fish, WA)

(The state agency is) putting artificial reefs out, sinking old barges, grass flats. We used to have beautiful grass on the bottom which supported the shrimp and the small fish that the bigger fish would come in and eat... It's a chain. The bag limits and size limits have helped considerably also. (Fish, FL)

I think (the state agency) provide a good service and they are out there trying to protect the environment, and trying to make us all safer by stopping those who are breaking the law... What would it be like if they weren't there? (X-Fish, FL)

Conclusions

In contrast to the hunter focus groups, where there were major differences in attitudes and values between hunters and ex-hunters, there appears to be no clear differences between anglers and ex-anglers in most of the satisfactions, attitudes and motivations around fishing.

We did not investigate the attitudes of non-anglers in this study due to time and logistical limitations. However, given the results of this phase of the study, we do not feel that non-anglers would differ dramatically in terms of most attitudes.

The socialization and naturalistic values appeared to be fairly consistent among geographic, racial, gender and motivational groups. In general, socialization and naturalistic values explain most of the satisfactions in fishing recreation in the United States. Other factors, such as access, costs, regulation, information, catch rates, size of fish and opportunity are secondary, and should only be considered in relation to socialization and naturalistic values.

There is a general perception that the quality of fishing has declined, but is improving. In general, members of the focus groups felt that state agencies should have a greater role in environmental protection, as this is widely held to be the reason for declines in fishing quality.

Neither the number of fish caught nor the size of fish caught are significant factors in fishing satisfactions. This is not to say that the number of fish caught or size of fish is not important to some segments of the angler population in the short-term, but rather we found no evidence that catch rates or size of fish explain initiation, retention, drop-out, or recruitment.

The cost of a fishing license is rarely a negative value for active or inactive anglers. There is a general discomfort with the rising

costs of fishing, but moderate increases in fishing fees, done with disclosure, information campaigns and equity are acceptable. License fee increases may explain short-term decreases in fishing participation, but do not appear to be impacting long-term trends.

The issue of agency image is more important to state agencies than to the public. Members of the focus groups had complaints about state agencies, but this seems to be related to a general dissatisfaction with government rather than issues of the agencies themselves. This is a fragile relationship and state agencies are expected to give greater emphasis on environmental protection and to be sensitive to issues of equity. The issue of equity arose regarding the interests of commercial versus recreational anglers, recreational anglers versus guides, and the average angler versus the upper class angler with "influence." Equity issues were salient among some segments of anglers.

The major conclusion concerning fishing participation in the United States based on these focus groups is that fishing is a part of a broad and complex social environment, especially related to family relationships. Fishing does not stand alone as a recreational activity which can be explained independent of other factors. In addition to the factor of familial socialization, anglers in the United States value the natural experience of being outdoors above all other factors.

END